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USE OF NAVAL FORCE IN CRISES:
A THEORY OF STRATIFIED CRISIS INTERACTION

VOLUME II

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
AND THE COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE STUDIES
OF STANFORD UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by

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CHAPTER VII

NAVAL OPERATIONS IN CRISES

The second phase of the research design consists of four case studies of crisis naval operations. The four cases are the 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis, the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, the 1967 Middle East War, and the 1973 Middle East War. The criteria for case selection were (a) significant U.S. naval operations were conducted and influenced the outcome of the crisis, (b) the naval operations were conducted in the immediate proximity of adversary naval forces or land-based forces that could threaten naval forces, and (c) there was a possibility of fighting erupting between the United States and the other side in the crisis.

Eight questions addressing specific aspects of the theory of stratified interaction will be addressed in each case study. The first three questions address the conditions necessary for stratified interaction to occur: delegated control, tight coupling between the forces of the two sides, and conditions of acute crisis. The first question is to what degree were interactions between the forces of the two sides at the scene of the crisis the result of actions taken in accordance with mechanisms of indirect control, rather than direct control by national leaders? The second question is were the forces of the two sides at the scene of the crisis tightly coupled with each other? The third question is were the forces of the two sides being used by their national leaders to convey political signals in support of crisis bargaining?

The fourth question is did crisis interactions at the tactical level become decoupled from the strategy being pursued by national leaders? There are seven potential causes of decoupling: communications and information flow problems, impairment of political-level decisionmaking, a fast-paced tactical environment, ambiguous or ambivalent orders, tactically inappropriate orders, inappropriate guidance in mechanisms of indirect control, and deliberate unauthorized actions by military commanders. To establish that stratified interactions became decoupled in a crisis requires two findings: first, that one of the seven factors just mentioned was present, creating conditions for decoupling, and, second, that operational decisions made by tactical-level decisionmakers differed from the decisions that political-level decisionmakers would have made in order to coordinate those actions with their political-diplomatic strategy for resolving the crisis.

The fifth question is did national leaders and on-scene commanders hold different perceptions of the vulnerability of on-scene forces to pre-emption and the need to strike first in the event of an armed clash? This question addresses the second corollary to the theory of stratified interaction, that the security dilemma can become stratified in crises. The implication of this is that decision-makers at the political and tactical levels can hold different perceptions of the offense-defense balance, vulnerability to pre-emption, and the need to strike first.

The sixth question is, when tactical-level interactions become decoupled, what factors inhibit escalation dynamics from occurring at the tactical level and being transmitted upward to the strategic and political levels of interaction? This question addresses the third corollary to the theory of stratified interaction, that escalation dynamics can be stratified in a crisis. Although escalation dynamics cannot be addressed directly--none of the cases escalated to war--research was done to identify conditions which may have inhibited escalation dynamics from occurring.

The seventh question is did actions taken with military forces send inadvertent signals to either adversaries or friends, and did inadvertent military incidents occur that affected efforts to manage the crisis? This question addresses crisis management problems that arise when military forces are employed in crises: the misperception dilemma and inadvertent military incidents.

The eighth question is did any of the three tensions between political and military considerations arise during the crisis? There are three tensions between political and military considerations that can arise when military forces are used as a political instrument in crises: tension between political considerations and the needs of diplomatic bargaining, on the one hand, and military considerations and the needs of military operations, on the other; tension between the need for top-level control of military options in a crisis, and the need for tactical flexibility and instantaneous decision-making at the scene of the crisis; and tension between performance of crisis political missions and readiness to perform wartime combat missions. All three tensions arise from the requirements of crisis management, the essence of which is placing political constraints on military operations.

The next four sections of this chapter present the case studies of the 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis, the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, and the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. Each case study opens with an overview of the background crisis and its context, followed by a description objectives and strategies of each side. After a review of the command and control methods that were used, United States naval operations during the crisis are discussed. Each case closes with a summary of findings on the eight research questions.

The 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis

The 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis erupted in August when the Chinese Communists launched an artillery blockade of Quemoy Island, cutting off the flow of supplies to the Nationalist Chinese garrison on the island. The United States responded by announcing a commitment to the defense of Quemoy and assisting the Nationalists in breaking the blockade of the island. The crisis tapered off in October 1958, after the Chinese Communists announced that they would not shell Quemoy on even days, allowing supplies to reach the island. The United States Navy played a prominent role in the crisis, escorting Nationalist convoys to Quemoy and patrolling in the Taiwan Strait.

Background

During World War II, the United States was allied with the Republic of China, ruled by President Chiang Kai-Shek and the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang). Although nominally fighting the Japanese, the Nationalists were more concerned with suppressing the revolution that had been launched in 1927 by the the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Clashes between Nationalist and Communist forces occurred during the war and intensified afterwards despite United States efforts at mediating between the two sides. Full-scale civil war erupted in 1947 and, after soundly defeating the Nationalists in several battles, the Communists proclaimed the

People's Republic of China (PRC) in Peking on October 1, 1949. Nationalist leaders fled the mainland to Taiwan on December 8, 1949, and re-established their government in Taipei.[1]

The Nationalists and Communists were irreconcilable because both sides claimed to be the only legitimate government of all China. The Communists proclaimed the goal of reuniting Taiwan with the mainland under Communist rule, and the Nationalists proclaimed the goal of returning to the mainland to place it under Nationalist rule. Thus was born the confrontation in the Taiwan Straits between the Nationalist Chinese and Communist Chinese.

The United States remained committed to the Nationalists and refused to recognize the People's Republic of China. When North Korea invaded South Korea on June 25, 1950, one of the first actions taken by the United States was to send the Seventh Fleet to protect Taiwan against invasion. U.S.-PRC relations deteriorated badly during the Korean War, especially after Chinese "volunteers" launched a

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[1] See James P. Harrison, The Long March to Power (New York: Praeger, 1972), pp. 91-431; O. Edmund Clubb, 20th Century China, Third Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), pp. 149-297; John King Fairbank, The Great Chinese Revolution, 1800-1985 (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), pp. 204-269. On the American role, see U.S. Department of State, "United States Relations With China, With Special Reference to the Period 1944-1949," Department of State Publication 3573, Far Eastern Series 30, August 1949, pp. 59-411; Michael Schaller, The U.S. Crusade in China, 1938-1945 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

devastating offensive against United Nations Command forces in October 1950 and President Eisenhower "unleashed" Chiang Kai-shek against the mainland in February 1953. The Nationalist-Communist confrontation became firmly embedded in the Soviet-American cold war when the PRC signed a thirty-year friendship treaty with the Soviet Union on February 14, 1950, and the ROC signed a Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement with the United States on February 9, 1951.[2]

The Nationalists occupied several islands off the coast of mainland China as they fled to Taiwan. Many of the islands were soon abandoned, but the Nationalists maintained garrisons on a few: the Quemoy (Jinmen) group, off the port city of Amoy across the straights from Taiwan; Matsu, off the port city of Fuchou across from the northern end of Taiwan; and the Tachen group, off of Wenchou about 200 miles north of Taiwan. The offshore islands had little value for the defense of Taiwan, but were useful as bases for military raids and intelligence missions against the mainland. The offshore islands also had important symbolic value to the Nationalists. Quemoy had been the site of the only significant Nationalist success in battle against the Communists, a victory commemorated with a large monument on the island.

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[2] See Roderick MacFarquhar, Sino-American Relations, 1949-71 (New York: Praeger, 1972), pp. 78-100; DuPre Jones, ed., China: U.S. Policy Since 1945 (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1980), pp. 85-96.

Nationalist forces were forced to evacuate the Tachen Islands during the 1954-1955 Taiwan Straits Crisis under the pressure of PRC air attacks. The crisis erupted on September 3, 1954, with heavy shelling of Quemoy by the PRC. The Nationalists returned fire and four days later began launching large-scale air attacks against the mainland. The United States responded by immediately ordering the Seventh Fleet to resume its patrol of the Taiwan Straits. By February 1955 the Nationalist position on the Tachen Islands had become untenable, and the United States convinced the ROC to withdraw its garrison with Seventh Fleet support. The withdrawal was conducted successfully without interference from the PRC, which declared a ceasefire in the area two days before the evacuation. The crisis tapered off after this as the PRC adopted a less militant line toward Taiwan and the United States. This policy, first apparent at the April 1955 Bandung Conference of African and Asian nations, called for peaceful liberation of Taiwan, and lasted until July 1958. China and the United States also commenced diplomatic discussions in Geneva, which would continue until December 1957.[3]

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[3] See Tang Tsou, "Mao's Limited War in the Taiwan Strait," Orbis 3 (Fall 1959): 336-38; O. Edmund Clubb, "Formosa and the Offshore Islands in American Policy, 1950-1955," Political Science Quarterly 74 (December 1959): 517-31; Morton H. Halperin and Tang Tsou, "United States Policy Toward the Offshore Islands," in John D. Montgomery and Arthur Smithies, eds., Public Policy, Volume 15 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 119-38; J.H.

The most important consequence of the 1954-1955 Taiwan Strait Crisis was a deepened United States commitment to the Nationalists. The United States signed a Mutual Defense Treaty with the ROC on December 2, 1954, and Congress passed the Formosa Resolution in January 1955. The Formosa Resolution authorized the President "to employ the Armed forces of the United States as he deems necessary for the specific purpose of securing and defending Formosa and the Pescadores against armed attack." The resolution did not explicitly state that the United States would defend the offshore islands, but stated that the President's authority to defend Formosa and the Pescadores included "the securing and protection of such related positions and territories of that area now in friendly hands."[4] The Eisenhower Administration chose not to make a formal, public commitment to defend the offshore islands, but did make a private commitment to Chiang Kai-shek on January 31, 1955, that the United States would defend the islands.[5] It is not clear, however,

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Kalicki, The Pattern of Sino-American Crises: Political-Military Interactions in the 1950s (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 120-55; Bennett C. Rushkoff, "Eisenhower, Dulles and the Quemoy-Matsu Crisis, 1954-1955," Political Science Quarterly 96 (Fall 1981): 465-80; Gordon H. Chang, "To the Nuclear Brink: Eisenhower, Dulles, and the Quemoy-Matsu Crisis," International Security 12 (Spring 1988): 96-122.

[4] U.S. Department of State, American Foreign Policy, 1950-55: Basic Documents, Volume II (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1957), pp. 2486-87.

[5] Chang, "To the Nuclear Brink," pp. 102, 104, 120.

that the commitment to defend the offshore islands, which was made as part of an agreement with Chaing to evacuate the Tachens, was intended to last indefinitely. The fact that in making the private commitment the Eisenhower Administration was breaking an earlier promise (January 19) to make a *public* commitment, suggests that the the private commitment--better described as informal assurance--was intended only to resolve the immediate crisis. President Eisenhower would later interpret the Formosa Resolution narrowly to mean that the United States could not defend the offshore islands unless their loss would threaten the defense of Taiwan. Everett F. Drumwright, the U.S. ambassador to the Republic of China in 1958, has stated categorically that "we had no private agreement with Chiang to defend the islands."[6] The Eisenhower Administration thus did not perceive itself in 1958 as bound by the informal assurances it had given Chiang in 1955 that the U.S. would defend the offshore islands.

Between 1954 and 1957 the Nationalists increased the Quemoy garrison from 30,00 to 86,100 troops--almost one-third of their ground forces. Chiang Kai-shek probably wanted to ensure that the United States would help defend

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[6] Quoted in Jonathan T. Howe, *Multicrises: Sea Power and Global Politics in the Missile Age* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971), p. 170. Also see Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Waging Peace, 1956-1961* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1965), pp. 293-5; Fred I. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), pp. 20-24; Howe, pp. 167-72, 184-93.

the island in the event of a Communist attack--loss of a third of the Nationalist army would seriously weaken the defense of Taiwan. Chiang also had not abandoned the option of someday taking offensive action against the mainland, and may also have deployed the troops to Quemoy so as to be able to rapidly exploit political upheaval on the mainland. The Eisenhower Administration was concerned over Chiang's aggressive designs and sought to restrain him by hedging the American commitment to defend the offshore islands.[7]

Tension in the Taiwan Straits remained at a relatively low level from April 1955 to July 1958. The Nationalists used the offshore islands for limited political and military operations, such as infiltration of agents into the mainland and broadcasting propaganda over loudspeakers. The Communist Chinese occasionally shelled the offshore islands or buzzed them with aircraft. Neither side increased the intensity of such operations prior to late August 1958.[8]

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[7] Eisenhower, p. 296; Tang Tsou, "The Quemoy Imbroglio: Chiang Kai-shek and the United States," Western Political Quarterly 12 (December 1959): 1075-77; Leon V. Sigal, "The 'Rational Policy' Model and the Formosa Straits Crisis," International Studies Quarterly 14 (June 1970): 126-7; Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), pp. 369-70; Leonard H.D. Gordon, "United States Opposition to Use of Force in the Taiwan Strait, 1954-1962," Journal of American History 72 (December 1985): 640-644; Howe, pp. 173-76.

[8] Morton H. Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis: A Documented History," Memorandum RM-4900-ISA (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, December 1966, declassified March 1975), pp. 8-12; Melvin Gurtov and Byong-Moo Hwang, China Under

The more important factor appears to have been that the PRC was growing frustrated over its lack of progress in peacefully liberating Taiwan. Ambassadorial talks with the United States in Poland had failed to yield any American concessions on the Taiwan issue.[9] In July 1958, the PRC shifted to a more militant policy toward the Nationalists, and began building up its air and naval forces in Fukien Province, across the Straits from Taiwan. On August 23, 1958, the Communist Chinese commenced an intense artillery bombardment of Quemoy, firing over 40,000 shells in two hours according Nationalist spokesmen.[10] This marked the start of the second Taiwan Strait Crisis.

Threat: The Politics of Strategy and Diplomacy (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), pp. 79-81. These two studies disagree as to whether or not Nationalist military activities on the offshore islands contributed to precipitating the crisis. Gurtov and Huang contend that Nationalist activities during the first half of 1958 were a serious provocation. Halperin, on the other hand, contends that the level of Nationalist activities had actually declined, and were much less provocatory in 1958 than in earlier years. The evidence presented in the two studies supports Halperin's view, but the low level of Nationalist military operations that were being conducted from the offshore islands were probably still an annoyance to the Communist Chinese.

[9] Gurtov and Hwang, pp. 75-83.

[10] "Chinese Communists Shell Quemoys in Record Attack," New York Times, August 24, 1958, p. 1; Morton H. Halperin and Tang Tsou, "The 1958 Quemoy Crisis," in Morton H. Halperin, ed., Sino-Soviet Relations and Arms Control (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967), pp. 274-5; Allen S. Whiting, "Quemoy 1958: Mao's Miscalculations," China Quarterly 62 (June 1975): 265-6; Harold C. Hinton, China's Turbulent Quest (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1972), p. 91; George and Smoke, pp. 371-3.

Political-Strategic Context

The PRC probably had three objectives in launching the artillery bombardment of Quemoy. The first objective was to deter the Nationalists from using the offshore islands for harassment of the mainland, or as a base for a future invasion of the mainland. This would reduce the annoyance of Nationalist military activities from the offshore islands and perhaps lead to a reduction in the Nationalist garrison on the islands. The second objective was to force the Nationalists to withdraw form Quemoy, similar to the manner in which they had been forced to abandon the Tachen Islands in 1955. The blockade of Quemoy appears to have been designed to cause logistical problems similar to those that forced evacuation of the Tachens. The third objective was to avoid war with the United States, which could well result in U.S. atomic attacks on the mainland. The advantage of a blockade over an outright invasion was that it was less likely to provoke the United States into attacking the mainland in support of the Nationalists. The fourth objective was to discredit the American commitment to the Nationalists and weaken U.S.-ROC relations. This could have been the outcome if the United States did not intervene to break the blockade and the Nationalists were forced to evacuate Quemoy. Weakening U.S.-ROC relations might make the Nationalists more amenable to negotiations and even weaken the defense of Taiwan. The fifth objective was to prompt the United States to resume the Ambassadorial talks in Poland, which the Americans had broken off and refused to resume despite a request from the PRC. If none of the other objectives were achieved, negotiations would offer an opportunity to gain American and Nationalist concessions in the Taiwan Strait.[11]

The strategy adopted by the PRC has been described by Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke as a limited probe: "In initiating their potent but limited probe via an artillery blockade, the Chinese Communists correctly perceived both the ambiguity of the U.S. commitment to Quemoy that had been written into the Formosa Resolution and the high probability that Washington would observe important limits on its military response if it decided to react to a low-level threat to Quemoy. Peking chose an appropriately cautious military operation for testing and clarifying the U.S. commitment, and for exerting pressure to erode the administration's willingness to accept risks in order to help defend Quemoy."[12] The essential features of the

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[11] Donald S. Zagoria, The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956-1961 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962), pp. 206-8; George and Smoke, pp. 371-6; Halperin and Tsou, "The 1958 Quemoy Crisis," p. 275; Whiting, pp. 264-7; Sigal, pp. 142-4; Gurtov and Hwang, pp. 92-94; Gordon, p. 645.

[12] George and Smoke, p. 370. Gurtov and Hwang, p. 91, reject the probe thesis. They are correct in contending that it was not Peking's objective simply to test American resolve, but the ambiguity of the American commitment to Quemoy made such a test an important element in the Communist Chinese strategy.

strategy were strict limits on the use of force against the Nationalists, avoidance of military engagements with American forces, and employment of a military option that could readily be scaled back or halted to avert United States intervention.[13] As Tang Tsou has pointed out, the Chinese Communists "shifted to the United States the decision as to whether there would be a direct encounter between American and Communist Chinese forces in Asia."[14] Peking thus adopted a strategy that allowed it to adapt its military campaign to the intensity of the American reaction--maintaining pressure on Quemoy if the U.S. commitment was weak, or backing off and settling for lesser objectives if the U.S. threatened escalation against the mainland.

Although Communist China primarily relied on an artillery barrage to blockade Quemoy, it also used PT boats

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[13] Tang Tsou, "Mao's Limited War," pp. 338-341; George and Smoke, pp. 365, 373-5; Zagoria, pp. 206-8; Thomas E. Stolper, China, Taiwan, and the Offshore Islands (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1985), pp. 86-87. The strategy employed by the Communist Chinese in the 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis is an example of the approach to use of force they employed from 1950 onward. See Fred Greene, U.S. Policy and the Security of Asia (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), pp. 202-224; Alan S. Whiting, "The Use of Force in Foreign Policy by the People's Republic of China," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 402 (July 1972): 55-66; Alan S. Whiting, The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence: India and Indochina (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1975), pp. 196-223; Steve Chan, "Chinese Conflict Calculus and Behavior: Assessment from a Perspective of Crisis Management," World Politics 30 (April 1978): 391-410; Edward W. Ross, "Chinese Conflict Management," Military Review 60 (January 1980): 13-25.

[14] Tsou, "Mao's Limited War," p. 341.

to attack Nationalist ships and occasionally attacked the island with aircraft. On August 24 the Communists made an attempt to seize Tung Ting Island, a tiny Nationalist-occupied island eighteen miles southwest of Quemoy. The Nationalists repelled the invasion force and there were no further Communist attempts to invade any of the islands in the Quemoy group. It is likely that Tung Ting was the only island that the Communist Chinese intended to invade at the outset. Tung Ting had minor military value: it was close to the sealanes to Quemoy, so Communist possession of it would aid their blockade of Quemoy. However, the primary reason for seizing Tung Ting would have been the psychological impact of its loss on the Nationalists. Loss of the island might have demoralized the Nationalists and, the Communists may have hoped, led the Nationalists to believe that Quemoy was also indefensible. Additionally, seizing a single, tiny island would be a low-level test the U.S. commitment to the defense of the offshore islands. If seizing Tung Ting did not evoke a strong U.S. response, other small islands in the Quemoy group probably would have been seized as part of protracted campaign against Quemoy.

The Soviet Union played a peripheral role in the crisis. Strains had begun to develop in the Sino-Soviet alliance in 1956 and 1957, but as of 1958 both sides were still trying to forestall the rupture that would occur later. During Khrushchev's July 31-August 3, 1958, visit to

Peking, Mao may have informed Khrushchev in very general terms of China's intention to take action against the offshore islands. In his memoirs, Khrushchev states that his government supported Chinese military aid requests for the upcoming operation. However, once the Chinese bombardment of Quemoy began, the Soviets were circumspect in their propaganda support until the Communists had taken steps to avert a direct clash with the United States.[15]

The Soviets appear to have had two objectives in the crisis. The first Soviet objective was to improve Sino-Soviet relations, the deterioration of which had in part been due to Chinese displeasure with the Soviet handling of American "imperialism." As long as the crisis did not result in war, the costs would be small--some military aid, propaganda support, and deterrent threats to the United States. The second Soviet objective was to avoid being dragged into war with the United States by the actions of Communist China. The Soviet strategy in the crisis reflected these objectives. The Soviets supported the limited Chinese objective of neutralizing the offshore islands as a threat to the mainland, but sought to restrain

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[15] Nikita S. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament, translated and edited by Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1974), pp. 261-3; John R. Thomas, "Soviet Behavior in the Quemoy Crisis of 1958," Orbis 6 (Spring 1962): 38-64; Alice Langley Hsieh, Communist China's Strategy in the Nuclear Era (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1962), pp. 123-7; Halperin and Tsou, "The 1958 Quemoy Crisis," pp. 278-86; Zagoria, 211-17.

the Chinese from taking action that might provoke a war with the United States.[16] By remaining circumspect in their support of Peking during the crucial opening phase of the crisis, when it was not clear how far the Chinese were willing to go in provoking the United States or how strongly the United States would react, the Soviets moderated the intensity of the crisis.

The Eisenhower Administration had three primary objectives, all of which were clearly articulated in American policy statements issued during the crisis. The first objective was to prevent Quemoy from falling into Communist hands. This objective was driven by the specific United States commitment to the Nationalist government on

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[16] Hsieh, pp. 119, 122, 129; Thomas, pp. 39-40; Zagoria, pp. 216-7; Halperin and Tsou, "The 1958 Quemoy Crisis," pp. 287-94; Howe, pp. 178-80, 193-200, 218-24. Analysts are divided on whether Moscow and Peking agreed or disagreed on the level and type support the Soviets would provide. One view is that the Soviets provided much less support than they had led the Chinese to expect. The Chinese made this accusation in a bitter 1963 denunciation of the Soviets, after the Sino-Soviet split had erupted in public acrimony. See Thomas, p. 63; Zagoria, p. 217; John Gittings, Survey of the Sino-Soviet Dispute, 1963-1967 (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 89-92; Alfred D. Low, The Sino-Soviet Dispute: An Analysis of the Polemics (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1976), pp. 86-90. A second view is that Mao and Khrushchev were in agreement on the level of support the Soviets would provide. See Halperin and Tsou, "The 1958 Quemoy Crisis," p. 287; Sigal, p. 142; Gurtov and Hwang, p. 89. A third view is that Mao and Khrusuchev did not discuss the issue at all and the anticipated level of Soviet support was not a major factor in Chinese decisionmaking. The key point for this study is that in any case the Soviet strategy was to restrain the Chinese Communists from taking action that might provoke war with the United States.

Taiwan, the policy of containment of Communist China, which meant resisting moves viewed as expansionist, and the general principle of resisting use of force to achieve territorial changes. The second objective was to prevent the crisis from involving the United States in a war with Communist China and the Soviet Union. This objective required that the United States restrain the actions taken by the Nationalists against the mainland and limit the role of U.S. forces in the conflict. The third objective was to stabilize the situation in the Taiwan Strait with a cease-fire, to be followed by an effort to get both sides to renounce the use of force against the other and to get the Nationalists to reduce their garrison on the offshore islands.[17]

The United States strategy in the crisis had four elements: first, to deter Communist China from invading Quemoy, expanding the conflict to Taiwan or the Pescadores, or attacking U.S. forces; second, to break the blockade of Quemoy with a minimum amount of force, in particular without

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[17] See "Dulles Cautions Peiping on Isles," New York Times, August 24, 1958, p. 1; "Eisenhower Sees Increased Need to Guard Quemoy," New York Times, August 28, 1958, p. 1; "U.S. Warns Peiping After Red Threat to Invade Quemoy," New York Times, August 29, 1958, p. 1; "U.S. Decides to Use Force if Reds Invade Quemoy," New York Times, September 5, 1958, p. 1; "President Says nation Must Fight if Necessary to Bar Quemoy Fall," New York Times, September 12, 1958, p. 1; Eisenhower, pp. 294-300, 691-3. Also see George and Smoke, pp. 364-5; Gordon, pp. 644-650; Kenneth T. Young, Negotiating with the Chinese Communists: The United States Experience, 1953-1967 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), p. 147.

attacking the Chinese mainland; third, to restrain the Nationalists from launching military operations that could escalate the conflict; and fourth, to pursue negotiations with the Nationalists and Communists toward reducing tensions in the Taiwan Strait.[18] The thrust of this strategy was to turn the tables on the Chinese Communists. Apparently assuming that the Nationalists and Americans would not be able to break the blockade without attacks on the mainland, Peking had adopted the limited probe strategy in order to force the decision to escalate on the United States. By adopting a strategy emphasizing a limited response--breaking the blockade without attacking the mainland--the United States passed "the onerous burden of deciding whether to accept the existing situation or to escalate" back to the Chinese Communists.[19]

The key requirement for the American strategy to succeed was to break the blockade of Quemoy without attacking the Chinese mainland. Militarily, this strategy carried a high risk of defeat. Early in the crisis American military and naval commanders in the Far East were not at

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[18] "Dulles Hints U.S. has Specific Plan for China Parlay," New York Times, September 10, 1958, p. 1; "Text of Eisenhower Speech on Taiwan Situation," New York Times, September 12, 1958, p. 2; "Washington Bars China Coast Raids," New York Times, September 24, 1958, p. 1; "Chiang Promises not to Use Force to Win Mainland," New York Times, October 24, 1958, p. 1; Eisenhower, pp. 294-300; Gordon, pp. 644-650; Young, p. 149.

[19] George and Smoke, p. 367.

all confident that they would be able to resupply Quemoy under the artillery barrage. The Chinese Communists had in effect written the rules for the military contest that was to follow, and those rules were highly unfavorable for the American strategy. Alexander L. George has aptly described the strategy adopted by the Eisenhower Administration as a "test of capabilities under restrictive, initially unfavorable, ground rules."[20] If the strategy succeeds, as it did in the 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis, the expected outcome is reversed without escalation of the conflict.[21]

Using the categories of crises presented in Chapter II, which distinguished between direct and indirect crises, for the United States it was an indirect crisis. The United States was brought into the confrontation through its alliance with the Nationalists on Taiwan. This meant that, in addition to controlling the actions or its own forces, the United States also had to be concerned with the behavior of its Nationalist allies, lest they provoke a war with Communist China. It also meant that the United States had to avoid the appearance of being overly conciliatory toward the adversary, lest an inadvertent signal of retrenchment be

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[20] Alexander L. George, "The Development of Doctrine and Strategy," in Alexander L. George, David K. Hall, and William E. Simons, <u>The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy</u> (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971), pp. 20-21.

[21] Ibid. Also see Alexander L. George, "Crisis Management: The Interaction of Political and Military Considerations," <u>Survival</u> 26 (September/October 1984): 230.

sent to the Nationalists and an inadvertent signal of acquiescence be sent to the Communists.

In summary, the essence of the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis was a limited probe by Communist China against the Nationalist-held offshore islands, countered by a United States strategy of engaging in a test of capabilities under restrictive ground rules. Both sides sought to achieve limited political objectives while preventing the crisis from escalating to war.

Command and Control

Prior to discussing the United States naval operations conducted in the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis, it will be useful to review the command structure that existed at the time. The 1958 defense reorganization, which removed the Joint Chiefs of Staff from the operational chain of command, had not yet been implemented. The unified commands reported to the JCS for operational control. The JCS used a system of designating one of the service chiefs to act as the "executive agent" for the JCS in controlling a particular operation. This ensured that a single commander, rather than a committee, was responsible for detailed management of the operation at the JCS level. The JCS executive agent was responsible to the JCS, but was normally accorded substantial authority and could work directly with the Secretary of Defense so long as he kept the JCS informed.

Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, Chief of Naval Operations, was the JCS executive agent for the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis.[22]

The next level in the chain of command was the Commander in Chief Pacific (CINCPAC), Admiral Admiral Harry D. Felt, the unified commander for all United States forces in the Pacific theater. CINCPAC reported to the JCS, usually through its executive agent. In his oral history, Admiral Felt states that he reported to the JCS and had substantial operational authority: "I had a way of operating which turned out very well... I'd send in something and, unless otherwise directed, I'm going to do this or that. That would be the Joint Staff's solution to the problem. And I never once got countermanded on that."[23] Admiral Felt is describing JSC control of CINCPAC by the method of control by negation, in which the subordinate commander reports his operational intentions rather than waiting for direct orders.

There were three component commands under CINCPAC: Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet (CINCPACFLT), Commander in Chief, Pacific Air Forces (CINCPACAF), and Commander in Chief, U.S. Army Pacific (CINCARPAC). Admiral Herbert G. Hopwood was CINCPACFLT during the Taiwan Strait

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[22] Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," p. 62.

[23] Admiral Harry D. Felt, "Reminiscences of Admiral Harry Donald Felt, U.S. Navy (Retired)," Volume II (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, Oral History Program, 1974), pp. 392-3.

Crisis. Under CINCPACFLT were two operational commands (the First Seventh Fleets), eight administrative commands (for training and readiness of specific types of forces, such as aircraft or destroyers), and six area commands (for U.S. naval forces assigned to particular areas, such as Japan and the Philippines).[24] Commander Seventh Fleet (COMSEVENTHFLT) as the command responsible for naval operations in the Western Pacific, including the seas around Taiwan.

During the Taiwan Strait Crisis, COMSEVENTHFLT was Vice Admiral Wallace M. Beakley, relieved on October 1, 1958, by Vice Admiral Frederick N. Kivette. The Seventh Fleet was divided into five Task Forces (TF) and one Task Group: Task Force 72, the Formosa Patrol Force; Task Force 73, the Logistic Support Force; Task Force 76, the Amphibious Assault Force; Task Force 77, the Attack Carrier Striking Force; Task Force 79, the Fleet Marine Force; and Task Force 70.4, the ASW Hunter-Killer (HUK) Group.[25] The units assigned to these task forces changed as ships and squadrons deployed from the United States for duty with the Seventh Fleet. Command of each task force was assigned to the senior flag officer commanding the units assigned to it,

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[24] Commander in Chief U.S. Pacific Fleet, "Commander in Chief United States Pacific Fleet, Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1959," July 27, 1959 (declassified 1983), p. 5, Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC (Cited hereafter as "CINCPACFLT Annual Report").

[25] Ibid.

so changed with the rotation of ships from the United States.

The Formosa Patrol Force originated during the Korean War, when President Truman ordered the Seventh Fleet to guard Taiwan against Communist attack. The Navy ships and patrol planes assigned to patrol the Formosa (Taiwan) Strait were designated a separate task force (TF 72) on August 24, 1950. Task Force 72 became the Formosa Patrol Force in 1953, reflecting the nature of its duties, and was renamed the Taiwan Patrol Force in 1957. Rear Admiral Paul P. Blackburn, Jr., was Commander of the Taiwan Patrol Force in 1958. During the crisis, the force consisted of a cruiser, approximately twelve destroyers (the number varied), two patrol plane squadrons, and two seaplane tenders, one of which served as the force flagship.[26]

The United States Taiwan Defense Command (USTDC) was established on December 1, 1953, as the Formosa Defense Command. From establishment of the command until February 1957, the Commander of the Seventh Fleet was "dual hatted" as Commander of the Formosa Defense Command. Although nominally a unified command (technically, a "sub-unified" command reporting to CINCPAC), the Formosa Defense Command was in fact only an administrative and liaison agency for

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[26] Enclosure to Commander U.S. Taiwan Patrol Force letter, Serial 386, August 10, 1959 (Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC); Vice Admiral Paul P. Blackburn, Jr., letter to author, May 30, 1988.

coordinating (vice controlling) the defense of Taiwan. The Commander of the Formosa Defense Command had operational control of the Formosa Patrol Force, but only because he was also COMSEVENTHFLT.[27]

In February 1957, the Formosa Defense Command received its own commander and was renamed the U.S. Taiwan Defense Command (COMUSTDC). This upgraded the status of the command and allowed more effective planning and coordination, but the commander still did not have operational control of U.S. forces defending Taiwan. On September 11, 1958, the U.S. Taiwan Defense Command became a true unified command with the commander having operational control of all U.S. forces committed to the defense of Taiwan. The U.S. Taiwan Defense Command consisted of three component commanders: Commander Taiwan Patrol Force (TF 72), Commander Air Task Force Thirteen (Provisional), and the Chief of the Military Assistance Advisory Group (U.S. Army units). The Commander of the Taiwan Defense Command during the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis was Vice Admiral Roland N. Smoot.[28]

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[27] Ibid; Commander U.S. Taiwan Patrol Force, "Review of Actions Occurring During Kinmen Resupply and Recommendations Based Thereon; Report of," letter, Serial 0019, November 22, 1958 (declassified 1972), Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC (Cited hereafter as "Taiwan Patrol Force Review").

[28] Ibid; "CINCPACFLT Annual Report," p. 8; Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," pp. 62, 370; "U.S. Unifies Force Guarding Taiwan for Quick Action," New York Times, September 20, 1958, p. 1.

United States communications capabilities in 1958 forced employment of delegated methods of control, rather than direct methods of control. Neither the Defense Communications System (DCS) nor the Worldwide Military Command and Control System (WWMCCS) were in existence (DCS was established in 1960 and WWMCCS was established in 1962). Existing communications systems had been created well before the unified command system was established and thus were not designed to support it. Washington could not establish direct radio communications with naval forces at sea, and excessive time delays precluded real-time control of forces on Taiwan. In his 1966 study of the crisis, Morton H. Halperin noted that "it sometimes took several days for classified messages to reach Washington from Taipei or vice versa," and that such delays were "significantly to hamper policymaking throughout the crisis."[29] The primary communications channels between commanders ashore were telegraph and teletype lines. Long-range high frequency radio communications were also available, but subject to atmospheric interference and limited to radiotelegraph (manual morse code) and slow radioteletype (major ships only). Direct radio communications between Washington and the Far East (or CINCPAC in Hawaii) were not possible, but telephone communications were available to Hawaii and were

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[29] Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," p. 250.

used heavily during the crisis (between Admiral Burke and Admiral Felt).[30]

Heavy reliance had to be placed on mechanisms of indirect control and the good judgement of the on-scene commanders. Washington did not provide detailed operational guidance to Navy operational commanders in the Far East. Vice Admiral Alexander Heyward, Director of the Politico-Military Affairs Division of the CNO's staff during the crisis, states that "civilian authorities did not attempt to exercise detailed control over those operations."[31] Navy commanders were delegated substantial decisionmaking authority and given relatively broad freedom of action. COMUSTDC and COMSEVENTHFLT originated and planned virtually all of the operations that were conducted.[32] Vice Admiral

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[30] For an overview of communications technology, see Ashton B. Carter, "Communications Technologies and Vulnerabilities," in Ashton B. Carter, John D. Steinbruner, and Charles A. Zraket, eds., Managing Nuclear Operations (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1987), pp. 233-257. For a brief history of the evolution of U.S. communications systems, see Bruce G. Blair, Strategic Command and Control: Refining the Nuclear Threat (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1985), pp. 51-53.

[31] Vice Admiral Alexander S. Heyward, Jr., letter to author, May 27, 1988. Vice Admiral Heyward was responsible for Navy liaison with the State Department and played a key role in coordinating naval policy with political policy during the crisis.

[32] Felt, "Reminiscences," pp. 392-3; Vice Admiral Herbert D. Riley (Chief of staff to CINCPAC in 1958), "The Reminiscences of Vice Admiral Herbert D. Riley, U.S. Navy (Retired)," Volume II (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, Oral History Program, 1972), pp. 360-1; Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," pp. 249-50.

Blackburn, Commander of the Taiwan Patrol force, states that he experienced "very little interference from the powers in Washington" during the crisis.[33] The only detailed guidance they received concerned limits on the operations they could conduct, such as how close U.S. Navy ships could approach the mainland.

Two of the mechanisms of indirect control warrant further attention. First, the United States, including the U.S. Taiwan Defense Command and the Taiwan Patrol Force, did not have contingency plans for assisting the Nationalists with the resupply of Quemoy. These commands began formulating plans for resupply and convoy escort in late August, when it became apparent that the Nationalists could not resupply Quemoy on their own, but the plans were not completed until September 3 (ten days after the Communist artillery barrage started) and the first convoy was not ready to sail until three days later.[34] As it turned out, however, this delay did not have a major impact on the crisis--the Eisenhower Administration did not commit itself to the defense of Quemoy until September 4, and the garrison on Quemoy had adequate supplies to hold for the additional two weeks that were required for substantial supplies to reach the island.

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[33] Blackburn, letter to author, May 30, 1988.

[34] "Taiwan Patrol Force Review," Enclosure 4, p. 1; Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," pp. 246.

One aspect of contingency planning caused particular problems for U.S. military commanders in the Pacific. Under the Eisenhower Administration's strategy of "massive retaliation," primary emphasis in war planning had been on plans calling for use of nuclear weapons from the onset of a conflict. Planning, training, and logistical preparations for extended conventional operations had been neglected, particularly in the Air Force. The Eisenhower Administration had previously directed, during the 1954-55 Quemoy-Matsu Crisis, that plans be made to defend the offshore islands with nuclear weapons.[35] When the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis erupted, some U.S. commanders in the Pacific, such as General Lawrence Kuter, Commander in Chief Pacific Air Force, expected that if a decision were made to defend Quemoy, it would be with nuclear weapons. However, the Eisenhower Administration, which was not enthusiastic about defending the offshore islands to begin with, directed that planning proceed on the basis that only conventional weapons would initially be used. Nuclear weapons would only be used as a last resort with specific approval of the President. This was a significant change in Administration policy, for which some commanders were not prepared. The problems caused by this policy shift primarily affected the Air Force, but also caused problems for the Navy, which had a

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[35] Chang, "To the Nuclear Brink," pp. 105-14.

significant nuclear delivery role in 1958.[36] This sudden shift from emphasis on nuclear weapons to their use only as a last resort is an extreme example of the problems military commanders can have when, in the process of drafting contingency plans, they must anticipate the approach civilian leaders will want to take in managing a crisis.

CINCPAC, the JCS, and the Eisenhower Administration paid close attention to the authority delegated to operational commanders. President Eisenhower states in his memoirs that he "saw no need to delegate to any subordinates my authority as Commander-in-Chief to commit United States forces to action," and that he therefore retained this authority himself.[37] However, the classified documentary record compiled by Morton H. Halperin shows that the President did delegate certain authority to the JCS. The President on September 6, 1958, approved a JCS request that it be delegated authority to take the following emergency actions, but only "under those circumstances when time does not permit securing the President's specific approval in each case":

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[36] Felt, "Reminiscences," p. 396; Admiral Charles K. Dennison (Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations at CINCPAC, 1956-1958), "The Reminiscences of Admiral Charles K. Dennison, U.S. Navy (Retired)," Volume I (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, Oral History Program, November 1978), pp. 536-41; Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," pp. 277-8, 292-3, 378-9, 538.

[37] Eisenhower, p. 299.

> 2. In the event of a major emergency arising from an attack on Taiwan and the offshore islands moving so rapidly that it would not permit consultation with the President, JCS would take the following actions on behalf of the Secretary of Defense: a) CINCPAC would be authorized to augment U.S. forces engaged in the defense of Taiwan from the resources of his own command; b) all U.S. forces worldwide would be alerted; c) oppose any major attack on Taiwan and attack mainland bases with all CINCPAC forces that can be brought to bear.
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> 3. In the event of a major landing attack on offshore islands, authority for the following actions not now authorized would be desirable: a) approve CHINAT [Chinese Nationalist] Air Force's striking enemy forces and mainland targets; b) authority for U.S. forces to strike with conventional weapons and CHICOM [Chinese Communist] assault of major proportions moving against Offshore Islands.
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> 4. Use of atomic weapons and U.S. air attack in support of CHINAT Air Force in 3(a) above [air strikes against mainland to defend offshore islands], as necessary, only as approved by the President.[38]

In approving this JCS request, the President specifically did <u>not</u> delegate authority for U.S. forces to strike mainland bases in the event of an attack on the offshore islands (paragraph three), nor did he delegate authority for U.S. forces to use nuclear weapons under any circumstances (paragraph four). As Halperin points out, the JCS did not further delegate this authority: "The Joint Chiefs looked upon the authority given to them as not subject to delegation to commanders in the field and hence did not pass on

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[38] Quoted in Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," pp. 285-6. Also see "Eisenhower Sees Increased Need to Guard Quemoy," <u>New York Times</u>, August 28, 1958, p. 2; "U.S. Decides to Use Force if Reds Invade Quemoy," <u>New York Times</u>, September 5, 1958, p. 1; "Dulles Hints U.S. has Specific Plan," <u>New York Times</u>, September 10, 1958, p. 1.

the authority to defend Quemoy."[39] The President and the JCS thus gave careful consideration to the authority they delegated to subordinate commanders, striking a balance between delegation and control.

The rules of engagement authorized U.S. ships and aircraft to use force in self-defense, but prohibited them from taking offensive action against the mainland. The CNO warned CINCPAC that U.S. forces must "avoid any action which is provocative or might be made to appear provocative before world opinion."[40] The rules of engagement issued by Commander Seventh Fleet authorized use of force to protect Nationalist ships under attack by Communist ships, aircraft, or submarines, but warned that U.S. forces were not to provoke fire from Communist shore batteries or engage in gunfire duels with them other than as necessary for self-defense and defense of Nationalist ships. Vice Admiral Beakley sent this admonition: "Remember, the shot you fire will be heard around the world, maybe in the floor of the UN. Be right. However, the objective is to get the supplies through."[41]

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[39] Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," p. 287.

[40] Gordon, p. 647. Also see Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," pp. 207-208; "Eisenhower Sees Increased Need to Guard Quemoy," New York Times, August 28, 1958, p. 2; "U.S. to Answer Any Air Attack," New York Times, September 12, 1958, p. 3; Gordon, p. 544

[41] Quoted in Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," p. 208. Also see Riley, "Reminiscences," p. 630.

Vice Admiral Blackburn, Commander of the Taiwan Patrol Force, states that U.S. forces could engage Communist Chinese forces "only in reponse to overt offensive action by the ChiComs against our forces," and that "TF 72 commanders were enjoined to avoid getting into any shooting with the ChiComs" and were instructed to avoid confrontations with the Chinese Communists.[42]

The rules of engagement issued by Commander in Chief Pacific and U.S. Taiwan Defense Command for the air defense of Taiwan were highly restrictive prior to the 1958 crisis. American fighters on Taiwan were only permitted to fire on hostile aircraft entering Taiwan's airspace and were not permitted hot pursuit in international airspace. U.S. combat air patrols were required to remain east of the "Davis Line," which ran approximately down the center of the Taiwan Strait. After the crisis erupted, the U.S. Air Force commander on Taiwan convinced CINCPAC and the JCS that these rules would cripple air defense efforts in the event of concerted Communist air strikes against Taiwan. In September the JCS approved three relaxations to the rules of engagement: first, U.S. fighters were authorized to engage Communist aircraft crossing the Davis Line on an apparent course toward Taiwan or allied forces; second, U.S. fighters were authorized hot pursuit in international airspace and

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[42] Blackburn, letter to author, May 30, 1988.

into Communist airspace; and, third, U.S. and Nationalist forces were authorized to fly combat air patrols to a limit of three miles of the mainland.[43]

The distinction between hot pursuit (which was authorized in self-defense) and retaliation (which required approval of the President) had been proposed by the National Security Council and approved by President Eisenhower in May 1955. By August 1956 this distinction had been incorporated into all rules of engagement issued to U.S. forces. The distinction between hot pursuit and retaliation was applied by the Eisenhower Administration to the rules of engagement for the air defense of Taiwan. If Communist Chinese aircraft threatened U.S. forces, Nationalist forces outside of three miles from the mainland, or Taiwan and the Pescadores, those Comminst planes could be pursued by U.S. fighters. If necessary, hot pursuit could continue into Communist Chinese airspace and even over the mainland. However, attacks by U.S. forces against the mainland airfields from which the Communist Chinese planes operated were defined to be retaliation, and had to be approved by the President.[44]

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[43] Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," pp. 200, 286; "U.S. to Answer Any Air Attack," New York Times, September 12, 1958, p. 3; "Dulles Hints U.S. has Specific Plan for China Parley," New York Times, September 10, 1958, p. 1; Blackburn, letter to author, May 30, 1988.

[44] Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," pp. 200, 286; Gordon, p. 644.

In summary, United States communications capabilities in 1958 forced employment of delegated methods of control, rather than direct methods of control. Heavy reliance had to be placed on mechanisms of indirect control and the good judgement of the on-scene commanders. The President and the JCS gave careful consideration to the authority they granted to subordinate commanders, striking a balance between delegation and control. For operations approved by the President, such as escorting Nationalist convoys to Quemoy, Navy commanders were delegated substantial decisionmaking authority and given relatively broad freedom of action. Washington did not provide detailed guidance on the conduct of operations to Navy commanders in the Far East.

Naval Operations

The United States Navy began stepping up its operations in the vicinity of Taiwan more than a month before the crisis erupted in August. On July 14, 1958, in response to the crisis in the Middle East, the Chief of Naval Operations had directed CINCPAC to place the Pacific Fleet alerted in accordance with the General Emergency Operations Plan (GEOP). In response to the GEOP alert, the First and Seventh Fleets were put on four-hour readiness to get underway, an additional attack carrier was deployed to the Western Pacific (for a total of three), an ASW Hunter-Killer (HUK) Group in Hawaii was readied for deployment on short notice (to augment the HUK Group already in the Western Pacific), a Marine Battalion Landing Team (BLT) of 1,300 troops was embarked in amphibious ships and departed for the Indian Ocean, and other forces were readied for wartime contingencies.[45]

In August 1958, as Nationalist concerns grew over the Communist military buildup in Fukien Province across from Taiwan, the United States took additional actions to increase its readiness to defend Taiwan. Communist China's deploying jet fighters to previously unoccupied coastal airfields in Fukien Province was a major concern to the Nationalists. Accordingly, the U.S. buildup emphasized air defense of Taiwan and the capacity to strike Communist airfields. On August 3, the Air Force deployed six F-100s to Taiwan. On August 5, the CNO directed that an attack carrier group remain in the Taiwan area and that a two-destroyer patrol be maintained continuously in the Taiwan Strait. On August 6, U.S. Air Force Pacific (PACAF) was placed on alert. These were all moves that Communist China could have detected. On August 17 the Strategic Air Command placed five Guam-based B-47 jet bombers on alert. U.S.

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[45] "CINCPACFLT Annual Report," p. 8; Howe, p. 193; E.B. Potter and Chester W. Nimitz, eds., Sea Power: A Naval History (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1960), p. 880; Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," p. 60. The General Emergency Operations Plan was the forerunner to the Defense Condition of Readiness (DEFCON) alert system instituted in November 1959.

Military commanders in the Pacific also sought further guidance on rules of engagement for the defense of Taiwan and on American policy concerning defense of the offshore islands.[46] These actions reveal a pattern of prudent preparations in response to indications of an increased Communist Chinese threat in the Taiwan Straits.

Although the GEOP alert that had been declared on July 14 was partially relaxed on August 7, U.S. forces in the Pacific were still at a high state of readiness when the shelling of Quemoy started on August 23. The U.S. Navy had substantial forces in the Western Pacific. The four Navy carriers in the Western Pacific were located as follows: the attack carrier USS John Hancock (CVA 19) and four escorts were at sea south of Taiwan, the attack carrier USS Lexington (CVA 16) and four escorts were at sea east of Japan, the attack carrier USS Shangri-La (CVA 38) and three escorts were in port Yokosuka, Japan, and the ASW carrier USS Princeton (CVS 37) and six escorts were at sea northeast of Taiwan. The Taiwan Patrol Force had two destroyers on patrol in the Taiwan Strait and two in port Kaohsiung, Taiwan. Most of the Seventh Fleet's amphibious force was in Buckner Bay, Okinawa, and a four-ship amphibious group with a Marine BLT embarked was in port Singapore. A dozen destroyers of Destroyer Flotilla One were scattered around

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[46] Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," pp. 63-5.

the Western Pacific. Additionally, several ships were scheduled to deploy to the Western Pacific in the near future for routine rotation of Seventh Fleet ships: the attack carrier USS Midway (CVA 41), the ASW carrier USS Bennington (CVS 20), and six destroyers.[47]

The U.S. Navy responded immediately to the Communist shelling of Quemoy. On August 24 Commander Taiwan Patrol Force ordered two destroyers to proceed to Tung Ting Island (eighteen miles southwest of Quemoy), which the Nationalists had reported as being invaded. The destroyers withdrew on finding no Communist Chinese activity in the area. Commander Taiwan Patrol Force also ordered USS Hopewell (DD 681) to proceed to the assistance of a Nationalist tank landing ship (LST) under attack by Communist torpedo (PT) boats, but directed Hopewell to remain clear of fighting and not fire unless fired upon. Communist PT boats circled Hopewell as she approached, but departed without firing on the American ship. The Commanding Officer of Hopewell, adhering to the rules of engagement in a tense and dangerous situation, refrained from firing on the PT boats.[48] Thus, caution

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[47] Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OP-333E), "Summary of U.S. Navy Action Accomplished During Taiwan Crisis," memorandum for the record, no date (declassified 1974), CNO Command File, Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC (Cited hereafter as "CNO Summary of Action").

[48] "Taiwan Patrol Force Review," Enclosure 1, p. 1; Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," p. 158.

on both sides averted the first potential clash between Communist and American forces in the Straits.

Commander Seventh Fleet ordered Commander Taiwan Patrol Force to station three destroyers twelve miles east of Quemoy in the Straits, ordered Hancock readied to commence combat air patrols over the straits and air strikes if directed by the President, ordered Lexington and Princeton to proceed to stations northeast of Taiwan at best speed, and ordered all available minesweepers to report to the Taiwan Patrol Force for duty. Commander Seventh Fleet also issued rules of engagement for the Taiwan Strait, authorizing Taiwan Patrol Force destroyers to fire on Chinese Communist units attacking U.S. or friendly ships in international waters, and directed that U.S. Navy aircraft remain at least twenty miles off the coast of the mainland. CINCPAC set Readiness Alert Condition Yankee, defined as "war imminent, be prepared to execute war plans" (roughly equivalent to DEFCON 2). The CNO directed CINCPAC to position the Seventh Fleet for support of Taiwan, an action already initiated by COMSEVENTHFLT.[49] Thus, by the end of the first full day of the crisis, U.S. naval forces had been mobilized to support the Nationalists, but with restrictions placed on their actions by the on-scene commanders in order to avoid clashes with Communist forces.

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[49] "CNO Summary of Action," p. 2, 5; "Taiwan Patrol Force Review," Enclosure 1, p. 1.

President Eisenhower approved the first Joint Chiefs of Staff operational directive for the crisis on August 25 and it was sent to CINCPAC and Commander Taiwan Defense Command the next day. This JCS directive authorized reinforcement of U.S. air defense forces on Taiwan, preparations to assume total responsibility for the air defense of Taiwan, preparations to escort and protect Nationalist resupply convoys to the offshore islands, augmentation of the Seventh Fleet as necessary, and preparations to assist the Nationalists in defending the offshore islands against invasion, to include air attacks on coastal air bases on the mainland. The message stated that "It is probable that initially only conventional weapons will be authorized, but prepare to use atomic weapons to extend deeper into Chinese Communist territory if necessary."[50] With only minor changes these were the operations and preparations carried out by U.S. forces throughout the crisis.

Over the next week, the U.S. Navy built up powerful forces in the waters around Taiwan. On August 25, the CNO ordered USS Essex (CVA 9) and four escorts, then in the Eastern Mediterranean supporting the marines ashore in Lebanon, to proceed to the Western Pacific via the Suez

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[50] JCS 252147Z AUG 1958 (JCS no. 947046), August 25, 1958 (declassified 1975), quoted in Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," pp. 112-114. Use of atomic weapons required specific authorization from the President.

Canal, providing the Seventh Fleet with a fourth attack carrier. On August 26, Commander Seventh Fleet ordered the attack carrier Shangri-La to proceed to Taiwan, and arranged for Marine Air Group Eleven (MAG-11), consisting of three fighter squadrons, to be transferred from Japan to Taiwan. That same day CINCPACFLT ordered several actions to increase Seventh Fleet strength: Midway and her escorts were to immediately depart Pearl Harbor for the Western Pacific, the heavy cruiser USS Los Angeles (CA 135) was to depart Long Beach for Pearl Harbor that day, and Seventh Fleet was to halt normal rotation of ships back to the United States until the reinforcements that had been ordered in arrived. Shangri-La joined Hancock and Lexington off Taiwan on August 30. Midway joined them on September 6, replacing Hancock off Taiwan. Essex joined them on September 16, allowing Hancock, which had been extended past its normal rotation date, to return to the United States. Commander Seventh Fleet also ordered additional destroyers and a cruiser added to the Taiwan Patrol Force, raising its strength from four destroyers to twelve destroyers and a cruiser. By mid-September the Seventh Fleet included four attack carriers, one ASW carrier, three cruisers, 41 destroyers and destroyer escorts, and seven attack submarines.[51]

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[51] "CNO Summary of Action," pp. 5-9; "Taiwan Patrol Force Review," Enclosure 1, pp. 1-2; "CINCPACFLT Annual Report," p. 8.

In late August the U.S. Navy began operations in support of the Nationalists and prepared to execute any contingency operations the President might order. Day and night combat air patrols over the Taiwan Strait commenced on August 25, remaining outside of twenty miles from Communist territory. The Taiwan Patrol Force increased the number of destroyers on patrol in the Straits from two to four, added a heavy cruiser to the patrol, armed its patrol planes with depth charges and torpedoes, and increased their patrols of the mainland coast. On August 26 CINCPACFLT directed Commander Seventh Fleet to prepare for conventional air attacks against coastal targets and nuclear strikes against inland targets if directed by the President, and the attack carrier force (TF 77) prepared plans for the strikes. The Seventh Fleet Cruiser-Destroyer Force (TF 75) prepared to bombard Communist artillery positions on the mainland in support of Nationalist convoys to Quemoy.[52] Floyd D. Kennedy, Jr., has observed that, because of the the Navy's presence, "the panoply of military options open to the President ranged from the passive device of resupply under fire to nuclear attack of selected Chinese targets."[53]

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[52] "CNO Summary of Action," pp. 6-12; "Taiwan Patrol Force Review," Enclosure 1, pp. 2-3.

[53] Floyd D. Kennedy, Jr., "The Creation of the Cold War Navy, 1953-1962," in Kenneth J. Hagan, ed., In Peace and War: Interpretations of American Naval History, 1775-1984 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), p. 317.

JCS sent the second major operational directive approved by the President to CINCPAC on 29 August. JCS authorized escort of Nationalist convoys if the Nationalist navy could not do so, directed that freedom of the seas be protected in the Taiwan Strait by operations confined to international waters, authorized the U.S. Taiwan Defense Command to assume responsibility for the air defense of Taiwan so that Nationalist planes would be free to defend the offshore islands, and directed that a total of 36 landing craft be turned over to the Nationalists to assist their resupply effort. The Commander of the U.S. Taiwan Defense Command was delegated authority to make the determination as to whether or not U.S. escort of Nationalist convoys was needed.[54]

After the start of the artillery blockade on August 23, the Nationalists made a reluctant and unsuccessful effort to continue resupplying Quemoy with LSTs. One Nationalist LST was sunk and second damaged on August 24 while evacuating wounded from Quemoy. On August 28 Rear Admiral Smoot, Commander of the U.S. Taiwan Defense Command, identified resupply of Quemoy as the critical issue, estimated that the Quemoy garrison could hold out another 15 to 30 days, and recommended that the U.S. commence escorting convoys immediately as a demonstration of support for the

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[54] "CNO Summary of Action," p. 8; Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," pp. 198-200.

Nationalists. On September 2 the Nationalists denied a Communist claim that the supply line to Quemoy had been cut, but on September 4 the Nationalists admitted that they could not get sufficient supplies to the island to keep pace with consumption. Ammunition was the critical item (particularly artillery shells), but fuel was also a serious concern. Food apparently was never a problem. Nationalist sources stated on September 5 that three of the last four LSTs sent to Quemoy had been forced to leave before they completed unloading supplies. U.S. records indicate that all five Nationalist attempts to resupply Quemoy with LSTs between August 23 and September 3 were turned back by Communist artillery fire and PT boats.[55]

The United States had great difficulty getting accurate and timely information on the Quemoy garrison's supply situation from the Nationalists. Many U.S. Navy commanders and civilian officials, including Rear Admiral Smoot, believed that the Nationalists were not making a concerted effort to resupply Quemoy. The Nationalists, it was suspected, might be trying to make it appear that air

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[55] "Taiwan Reports 5 Red Boats Sunk and 6 Set Afire," New York Times, September 2, 1958, p. 4; Hanson Baldwin, "The Quemoy Blockade," New York Times, September 5, 1958, p. 4; "Quemoy Again Pounded by Reds," New York Times, September 5, 1958, p. 1; "Quemoy Garrison Supplied Under U.S. Fleet's Escort," New York Times, September 8, 1958, p. 1; "CNO Summary of Action," pp. 12, 14; Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," pp. 153-5, 162; Blackburn, letter to author, May 30, 1988.

attacks on the mainland were urgently needed in order to resupply Quemoy. Chiang Kai-shek asked for United States concurrence on air strikes against the mainland, a request that President Eisenhower turned down. The convoy escort option was thus a compromise between doing nothing, which might have eroded Nationalist morale and strained U.S.-ROC relations, and attacking the mainland, which risked a direct clash between Communist and American forces.[56]

Soon after the crisis erupted, American leaders anticipated that U.S. Navy escort might be necessary to get Nationalist convoys through to Quemoy. On August 25 President Eisenhower approved a JCS directive authorizing preparations to escort and protect Nationalist resupply convoys to the offshore islands. On August 26 CINCPACFLT directed Commander Seventh Fleet to prepare to escort and protect Nationalist resupply convoys to the offshore islands while they were in international waters, and on August 27 Commander Seventh Fleet directed Commander Taiwan Patrol Force to commence planning for convoy escorts. Fighter air cover for the convoys would be provided by U.S. Navy carrier aircraft and, during the day, by Nationalist and U.S. Air Force fighters on Taiwan (neither had night fighters). On

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[56] Vice Admiral Roland N. Smoot, "Reminiscences of Vice Admiral Roland N. Smoot, U.S. Navy (Retired)," (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, Oral History Program, 1972), p. 315; Riley, "Reminiscences," pp. 628-33; "CNO Summary of Action," p. 10; Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," pp. 203, 249.

August 29, in response to a request from Chiang Kai-shek for even greater assistance, the President approved a JCS directive authorizing the Navy to escort and protect Nationalist resupply convoys to the offshore islands while they were in international waters. Commander Seventh Fleet on August 30 authorized Commander Taiwan Patrol Force to commence escort operations, plans for escorting were ready on September 3, and the first Nationalist convoy was ready to sail on September 6.[57]

The most important issue in the decision to escort Nationalist convoys was how close U.S. navy ships would be allowed to go to Quemoy. In his oral history then-CNO Admiral Arleigh Burke states that President Eisenhower initially wanted the escorts to remain twelve miles offshore, whereas Burke recommended they go in to three miles.[58] There were also pressures to escort Nationalist convoys all the way to the beach, and even to have U.S. ships carry the supplies to the beach. Chiang Kai-shek requested that the U.S. escort to the beach, and Rear Admiral Smoot and U.S. Ambassador Everett Drumright supported his request. Admiral Burke recommended having

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[57] "CNO Summary of Action," pp. 6-11; "Taiwan Patrol Force Review," Enclosure 1, pp. 2-3; Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," pp. 246-8

[58] Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, "Reminiscences of Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, U.S. Navy (Retired)," (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, Oral History Program, 1973), p. 44.

U.S. ships land supplies for the Nationalists, who had great difficulty offloading supplies over the beach. The arguments against going within three miles of Quemoy were that it implied an intent to directly defend the island (as opposed to assisting resupply), that escorting to three miles offshore would be sufficient to deter Communist PT boats, and that the three mile limit kept U.S. ships out of range of almost all Communist artillery.[59] President Eisenhower decided to halt the escorts at three nautical miles from Quemoy. The August 29 JCS directive specified that convoy escorts and fighter air cover were to remain in international waters and airspace, meaning outside of Communist China's three-mile territorial limit and no closer than three miles to Quemoy. Convoy escorts were further advised to avoid known Communist shore batteries that could reach them in international waters.[60]

On September 4, Communist China, perhaps anticipating that the United states was about to join in the Nationalist resupply effort, announced that it was increasing its territorial waters from three to twelve nautical miles. The Communist Chinese announcement specifically included all of the Nationalist-held offshore islands in its territorial

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[59] Burke, "Reminiscences," p. 43; Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," pp. 201-206.

[60] "CNO Summary of Action," pp. 9, 11; "Taiwan Patrol Force Review," p. 2; Blackburn, letter to author, May 30, 1988.

waters and stated that "No foreign vessels for military use and no foreign aircraft may enter Chinese territorial sea and airspace above it without permission of the Government of the People's Republic of China."[61] The United States promptly rejected the twelve-mile limit, stating it would continue to act as if Communist China had a three-mile limit.[62] The orders to the convoy escorts and their air cover were not changed.

The Nationalist Chinese were informed on September 3 that the U.S. would commence escorting their convoys. That same day the U.S. Taiwan Defense Command completed its plans for escort operations. Commencing the next evening (September 4), U.S. Navy ships began small-scale escorting of Nationalist supply ships in the Taiwan Straits, apparently for training and familiarization in preparation for daylight convoys three days later.[63]

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[61] "Communist China Claims A Sea Limit of 12 Miles," New York Times, September 5, 1958 p. 1; "Text of Peiping Statement," New York Times, September 5, 1958 p. 3.

[62] "U.S. Rejects Red Claim," New York Times, September 5, 1958 p. 1.

[63] "Taiwan Patrol Force Review," Enclosure 1, p. 3; "Quemoy Garrison Supplied Under U.S. Fleet's Escort," New York Times, September 8, 1958, p. 1; Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," p. 246. The small-scale night convoy escort operations conducted September 4-6 were not revealed to the press until after the first daylight convoy on September 7. These night convoys delivered only a very small amount of supplies to Quemoy. In addition to training the Nationalist and U.S. navies in operating together--a crucial task in itself--the initial small-scale escort operations provided a test of the Communist reaction.

Commander Taiwan Patrol Force issued Operation Plan (OPLAN) 124-58 and Operation Order (OPORD) 324-58 for convoy escort operations on September 6. The U.S.-escorted Nationalist convoy operation was code-named "Lightning." The first Lightning convoy was on September 7. The convoy consisted of two Nationalist medium landing ships (LSMs) escorted by two patrol boats and two corvettes. The U.S. escort consisted of four destroyers and two cruisers, including USS Helena (CA 75) with Commander Seventh Fleet embarked. The Communists did not interfere with the U.S. escorts or the unloading of supplies, but the Nationalist unloading effort was hampered by poor organization and training on the beach. Also on September 7, two Nationalist merchant ships delivered supplies to Matsu without Communist interference.[64]

The second Lightning convoy on September 8 did not fare as well. Chinese Communists artillery opened fire on the two Nationalist LSMs two hours after they reached the beach at Quemoy, damaging one and forcing them to withdraw. One LSM had unloaded only a small amount of supplies, while the other had not started unloading. Lack of organization and training on the beach were again blamed for delays in

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[64] "CNO Summary of Action," p. 15; "Taiwan Patrol Force Review," Enclosure 1, p. 3; "Quemoy Garrison Supplied Under U.S. Fleet's Escort," New York Times, September 8, 1958, p. 1; Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," pp. 246-8, 294-5.

unloading. The next two Lightning convoys, on September 11 and 13, experienced a similar fate, coming under heavy Communist artillery fire, unloading negligible amounts of supplies, and suffering one LSM destroyed and one LSM damaged. The fifth Lightning convoy, on September 14, marked the first use of tracked landing vehicles (LVTs) launched from LSTs for carrying supplies to the beach. Using this method, lightning convoys five through nine (September 14 to 19) were able to land an average of 151 tons each (compared with 33 tons each for convoys two through four).[65] By late September it was clear that the Nationalists would be able to keep the Quemoy garrison resupplied under fire.

On the night of September 18 the U.S. Navy used a dock landing ship (LSD), a type of ship with a floodable well deck in which landing craft could be carried and launched at sea, to deliver three eight-inch howitzers to Quemoy. In addition to being powerful conventional weapons--far superior to Communist artillery shelling Quemoy--the eight-inch howitzers were capable of firing shells with atomic warheads. The United States did not provide the Nationalists with atomic shells for the howitzers, but the mere presence of the howitzers on Quemoy sent a strong deterrent

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[65] "CNO Summary of Action," pp. 15-18; "Taiwan Patrol Force Review," Enclosure 1, pp. 4-6; Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," pp. 295-304, 363-69, 422-41.

signal to the Communist Chinese.[66] USS Catamount (LSD 17) carried three Nationalist landing craft that successfully delivered the howitzers to the beach. Catamount successfully delivered three more eight-inch howitzers to Quemoy the night of 20 September.[67] The success of this resupply method further reinforced the belief that the Communist blockade had been broken.

Great caution was exercised during the Quemoy resupply operations to avoid clashes with Communist Chinese forces. On September 7 The CNO directed that, as long as the Communists refrained from shelling Nationalist supply ships, only one destroyer was to be positioned within view of Quemoy and the mainland while Nationalist convoys were unloading supplies, the rest of the escorts were to remain just over the horizon ready to respond in the event of a Communist PT boat attack. This restriction was lifted on September 10 by Commander Seventh Fleet in response to Communist shelling of the second convoy, but on-scene commanders remained cautious. Captain Edward W. Behm,

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[66] "U.S. Navy Lands Guns at Quemoy," New York Times, October 1, 1958, p. 10; Hanson W. Baldwin, "Reminiscences of Hanson Weightman Baldwin, U.S. Navy (Retired)," Volume II (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, Oral History Program, 1976), p. 527; Blackburn, letter to author, May 30, 1988.

[67] "History of USS Catamount (LSD 17) from 8 July 1944 to 31 December 1964," Ships History Branch, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC, p. 12; Commander Wayne D. Baker, U.S. Navy (Retired), Commanding Officer USS Catamount in 1958, letter to author, April 11, 1988.

commander of a convoy escort during the crisis, states that the escorts were directed to remain at least five miles from the mainland. This limit was probably set by Commander Taiwan Patrol Force to avoid Communist artillery, even though the JCS directive allowed ships to approach as close as three miles. When JCS authorized use of U.S. Navy LSDs in the resupply effort, CNO specified that they remain at least three miles offshore from Quemoy. On October 8 Commander Taiwan Patrol Force increased this distance to 12 miles. In response to the Communist ceasefire announced October 6, the CNO suspended escort operations and directed Taiwan Defense Command to avoid provocative actions (by the time this order was received two more convoys had been escorted on October 7, the last Nationalist convoys escorted during the crisis). On October 23, three days after the Communists resumed shelling Quemoy, the CNO authorized convoy escorting to resume if needed, but no further escorts were required.[68] Due to these precautions and Chinese Communist restraint there were no clashes between United States and Communist forces during the resupply operations.[69]

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[68] Captain Edward W. Behm, U.S. Navy (Retired), Commanding Officer of USS McGinty (DE 365) during the crisis, letter to author, February 19, 1988; "CNO Summary of Action," pp. 3-4; "Taiwan Patrol Force Review," pp. 4, 8; Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," pp. 363-70, 407.

[69] Blackburn, letter to author, May 30, 1988.

Training in amphibious unloading operations provided by the U.S. Navy to the Nationalist Chinese Navy was crucial to the success of the Quemoy resupply operation. Early Nationalist resupply efforts were largely ineffective due to their lack of experience with unloading supplies over the beach rather than in port. U.S. Navy assistance led to the shift from beaching LSMs and unloading them by hand, which had proven disastrous under fire, to the method of launching LVTs from LSTs offshore. Another U.S. Navy technique taught to the Nationalists was launching landing craft from an LSD offshore. This resupply method required U.S. participation because the Nationalists did not have LSDs of their own. By October the Nationalists had become so proficient at unloading supplies over the beach that further U.S. navy assistance in this area was no longer necessary.[70]

In addition to the resupply operation, the U.S. Navy participated in the crisis in several other ways. A joint U.S.-Nationalist amphibious landing exercise, code-named "Land Ho," was held on Taiwan on September 8. The exercise was publicized to make it a signal of the U.S. defense relationship with Taiwan. U.S. Navy cruisers and radar picket destroyers monitored Communist air activity over the Taiwan Strait and provided air control and intercept

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[70] "Taiwan Patrol force Review," Enclosure 1, pp. 4-8; Felt, "Reminiscences," pp. 391-2; Blackburn, letter to author, May 30, 1988.

services for Navy carrier-based fighters and U.S. fighters on Taiwan. A radar picket destroyer provided air control and navigation services for Nationalist transport aircraft dropping supplies to Quemoy by parachute. The attack carriers around Taiwan maintained a combat air patrol over the Taiwan Strait from August 25 to September 6, when it was cancelled due to the low level of Communist air activity and the buildup of aircraft on Taiwan. Navy fighters made high-altitude, high-speed dashes up and down the strait to ensure that Communist radar operators knew that the latest U.S. jets were on-scene. The Taiwan Patrol Force kept at least four destroyers on patrol in the Straits from August 25 to October 29, and periodically had a destroyer make an appearance off Matsu to show U.S. interest in the Nationalist-held island. Patrol planes of the Taiwan Patrol Force kept a close watch on the mainland coast. Navy ships and aircraft conducted electronic intelligence collection against Communist Chinese radar sites, an important preparation in the event that air strikes had been necessary.[71] These operations contributed to U.S. readiness in the Taiwan Strait and sent a strong deterrent signal to Communist China.

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[71] "Taiwan Games Begin," New York Times, September 8, 1958, p. 3; "CNO Summary of Action," pp. 14-15; "Taiwan Patrol Force Review," pp. 5-8, 11; "CINCPACFLT Annual Report," pp. 8-9; Commander Harry C. Lowe, U.S. Navy (Retired), Commanding Officer of USS Dennis J. Buckley (DDR 808) during the crisis, interview by author, February 12, 1988 (Buckley provided air control for Nationalist air drops over Quemoy); Felt, "Reminiscences," p. 389.

Vice Admiral Beakley, Commander of the Seventh Fleet at the height of the crisis, described the climate in the Taiwan Straits in a candid letter on September 8, 1958, to a former Seventh Fleet Commander:

> Times have been busy out here, mainly in trying to keep up with answers to dispatches from Washington and Pearl [Harbor, location of CINCPACFLT and CINCPAC]. I guess we do forget to tell them each change of course for each ship at times. [CNO Admiral Arleigh] Burke wanted us to impress the ChiComs [Chinese Communists] by flexing our muscles, and after the show yesterday, we should have won the world championship weight lifting contest. My CVA [attack carrier] group commanders were a little too enthusiastic, and we had 4 bad crashes and lost 3 pilots before I got them slowed down. I have to get some of these carriers off the line pretty soon or we'll have breakdowns in more ways than one. I believe Taiwan has got all the forces that they need at present on the island itself, and with CVA back-up, we should relax the rest of us. [Rear Admiral Paul H.] Ramsey [Commander Carrier Group One in Hancock] has worked out a plan for 4 carriers using conven-tional weapons, mainly against Communist air targets, which I have salted away to draw out when I need them [sic]. I think we could take the heart out of ChiCom air without much trouble. I think if the ChiNats [Chinese Nationalists] would slow down now on provocative actions that the situation would quiet down. I think they know we mean business and are not going to let Quemoy and the Matsus starve.[72]

Vice Admiral Beakley's comments are revealing for three reasons. First, he shows mild annoyance toward the many requests for information he received from the CNO.[73]

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[72] Vice Admiral Wallace M. Beakley, letter to Vice Admiral A.M. Pride, September 8, 1958, in Personal Papers, Box 3, Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC.

[73] The CNO's extra reporting requirements and requests for information are listed in "CNO Summary of Action," p. 2.

Second, he reveals that the Navy paid a price for the show of force put on by the combat air patrol over the Taiwan Straits, losing four planes and three pilots in accidents. Third, he expresses the view that the situation would quiet down if the Nationalists would "slow down on provocative actions," a sentiment similar to those expressed by Rear Admiral Smoot on Taiwan and Vice Admiral Riley at CINCPAC.[74] U.S. Navy commanders in the Pacific were well aware of the danger of the Nationalists dragging the United States into a war with the Communists.

The final step in this review of U.S. Navy operations is to examine the interactions with Communist Chinese forces *that could have occurred and the interactions with Communist* Chinese forces that did occur during the crisis. The following interactions conceivably could have occurred during the crisis: Communist artillery fires on U.S. ships, prompting counterbattery fire; Communist planes, PT boats, or submarines attack U.S. ships, prompting return fire or an air battle; Communist fighters attack U.S. fighters or patrol planes over the Straits, prompting an air battle; or Communist planes attack Nationalist ships or threaten Taiwan, prompting an air battle. Additionally, a wide range of accidents could have occurred, including U.S. ships or planes stray into Communist waters or airspace, prompting a

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[74] See Smoot, "Reminiscences," pp. 313-15; Riley, "Reminiscences," pp. 619-21.

Communist attack, and indiscriminate Communist attacks on U.S. forces mistaken for nationalist forces. The high level of U.S. Navy forces in the waters around Taiwan provides grounds for expecting that there was ample opportunity for inadvertent military incidents to occur. And, given the high level of tension in the Taiwan Straits, any of these incidents could have triggered a clash between the United States and Communist China.

There was, in fact, very little tactical-level interaction between United States and Communist Chinese forces, despite the intensity of U.S. Navy operations close to the coast of the mainland. Both sides took actions to avoid clashes with the other side. During convoy escort operations, Communist planes and PT boats were sometimes seen in the vicinity of Quemoy, but they never challenged U.S. navy units. Vice Admiral Blackburn states that during U.S. convoy escort operations, "Our presence seemed to be a sufficient deterrence to cause the ChiCom naval forces to avoid a naval confrontation."[75] U.S. ships were careful to remain clear of Communist artillery as much as possible, and were never fired upon by the Communists even when Nationalist ships nearby were being shelled. U.S. destroyers on patrol in the Taiwan Strait were directed to remain at least twelve miles from the mainland and Communist-held islands, a

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[75] Blackburn, letter to author, May 30, 1988.

distance that was increased to fifteen miles on October 21. There were no reported instances of U.S. ships on patrol in the Straits encountering Chinese Communist naval vessels or submarines. Communist fighters did not venture out over the Straits to challenge U.S. Navy combat air patrols, although they did engage in several air battles with the Nationalist Air Force. According to the commanding officer of a U.S. radar picket destroyer in the Taiwan Straits, Communist aircraft were occasionally detected over the Straits, but they stayed to the west of the Davis Line that marked the limit of the Taiwan air defense intercept zone. The U.S. Navy, for its part, was careful to keep its fighters at least twenty miles off the coast of the mainland.[76] Thus, overall, there was surprisingly little tactical-level interaction between the two sides.

The closest that the United States and Communist China came to a clash during the crisis was the standoff between the U.S. destroyer Hopewell and Communist PT boats on August 24, described above. No shots were exchanged in this or any other incident during the crisis. A second incident similar

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[67] Lowe, interview by author, February 12, 1988; Baker, letter to author, April 11, 1988; "Taiwan Patrol Force Review," pp. 8-11; Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," p. 533; Blackburn, letter to author, May 30, 1988. Also see Oran R. Young, The Politics of Force: Bargaining in International Crises (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 224-26; Phil Williams, Crisis Management: Confrontation and Diplomacy in the Nuclear Age (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1976), pp. 112-13.

to this occurred in mid-October. USS McGinty (DE 365) was patrolling southwest of Quemoy when a Nationalist patrol craft (PC) close to Quemoy was taken under fire by Communist shore batteries. The Nationalist PC fled seaward at best speed and McGinty closed the PC at 24 knots to cover its withdrawal with a smoke screen. Six rounds of Communist artillery fire landed astern of McGinty but neither the U.S. nor the Nationalist ship were damaged.[77] It appears that the Communists ceased firing as soon as McGinty joined the PC, the same pattern as in the Hopewell episode.

There were relatively view military accidents during the crisis. The U.S. Navy lost at least four jet fighters in flying accidents, but none of these incidents caused or resulted from interaction with Communist forces--they were caused by maintaining an excessively high tempo of operations. There was one incident in which Nationalist Air Force planes attacked Nationalist Navy ships in the Taiwan Straits, but the correct identities of the attackers and victims were established before U.S. forces became involved. Communist China made two allegations that U.S. ships or planes had violated their twelve-mile territorial waters (apart from their frequent protests over the convoy escorts). On September 11 the Communist Chinese claimed that a U.S. Navy patrol plane had overflown two Communist

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[77] Behm, letter to author, February 19, 1988.

held islands the previous day. Commander Taiwan Patrol force investigated the allegation and determined that the plane had not approached Communist territory closer that thirty miles. On October 9 the Communist Chinese charged that two U.S. navy destroyers had invaded their territorial waters. Although the ships initially denied the charge, Commander Taiwan Defense Command later determined that one leg of the patrol they had been on could have taken them close to Communist waters. Commander Taiwan Patrol Force changed the patrol route to open the closest approach to Communist territory and no further incidents occurred.[78]

Communist China announced a one-week ceasefire around the offshore islands on October 6, on the condition that U.S. ships not escort Nationalist resupply convoys to Quemoy. The U.S. ceased escorting Nationalist convoys on October 8 and never resumed the escorts. On October 12 Peking extended the ceasefire, but then on October 20 resumed the shelling, claiming that U.S. ships had escorted a Nationalist convoy on October 19. There was a Nationalist convoy on October 19, but Taiwan Patrol Force did not escort it. However, the evening of October 19 a U.S. LSD, with U.S. escorts, had conducted a resupply mission off of Quemoy, remaining 12 miles off the island. This was probably the event that the Chinese Communists used as

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[78] "Taiwan Patrol Force Review," pp. 4, 6, 9, 11; Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," p. 533

grounds for breaking the ceasefire. There had also been LSD resupply operations the evenings of October 8, 12, and 13, all without protest from the Communists, making it doubtful that the October 19 LSD convoy was the primary reason why the Communists decided to resume shelling.[79] The most likely cause of the renewed shelling was the visit of U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to Taiwan. Dulles arrived in Taipei on October 20 for discussions with Chiang Kai-shek. The Communist Chinese shelling was probably intended to disrupt the Chiang-Dulles talks, perhaps increasing U.S. pressure on Chiang to make concessions on the offshore islands, and to signal continuing dissatisfaction with the status *quo* in the Taiwan Straits.

In summary, U.S. Navy forces in the seas around Taiwan provided the President with a wide range of military options for dealing with the Communist Chinese probe of the offshore islands. Navy attack carriers provided a potent deterrent threat, and the Taiwan Patrol Force provided the escorts crucial for the test of capabilities strategy that the President adopted in the crisis. Navy commanders imposed restrictions on their forces to avoid clashes with the Communists and, as shown by the performance of the destroyer Hopewell, exercised restraint when in potentially dangerous situations with Communist units. Very little tactical-level

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[79] "Taiwan Patrol Force Review," pp. 9 10.

interaction took place between United States and Chinese Communist forces because both sides took steps to prevent clashes from occurring.

Findings

This section will review the 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis to answer the eight research questions. The first question is to what degree were interactions between the forces of the two sides at the scene of the crisis the result of actions taken in accordance with mechanisms of delegated control, rather than direct control by national leaders? The Eisenhower Administration was concerned about the danger of events getting out of control in the Taiwan Straits. The position paper approved by the President on September 4 noted that, because U.S. destroyers would be operating up to three miles from the mainland, "There is thus a possibility of a deliberate or accidental hit by the Chicoms, which would have potential and unplanned reactions which might involve at least limited retaliation."[80] To control the risk of escalation, the President retained total control of nuclear weapons and delegated authority to retaliate with conventional weapons against mainland targets only under circumstances in which the Joint Chiefs did not have time to consult with the him prior to taking action.

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[80] Eisenhower, p. 692.

Beyond this, however, United States communications capabilities in 1958 forced employment of delegated methods of control and heavy reliance on mechanisms of indirect control. U.S. Navy commanders in the Pacific had significant authority to conduct operations as they saw fit--within the policy limits set by the President and the JCS--and exercised that authority to its limits. The only detailed instructions provided by the JCS concerned rules of engagement and the limit on how close ships could approach Quemoy and the mainland. Although there would later be pressure to allow U.S. ships to go right up to the beach in Quemoy, when the crisis erupted Commander Taiwan Defense Force and Commander Taiwan Patrol Force were keeping their ships twelve miles away from the mainland and the offshore islands.[81] Thus, the three mile limit imposed by JCS was actually a <u>relaxation</u> of the restriction for the forces on-scene. Throughout the crisis Washington was ill-informed of the status of operations currently in progress, which precluded American leaders from exercising close control of the operations.

The overall picture that emerges is of the Eisenhower Administration exploiting the flexibility of the U.S. command system for crisis management purposes. Operational decisions that held the greatest risk of escalation were

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[81] "Taiwan Patrol Force Review," Enclosure 1, p. 1; Blackburn, letter to author, May 30, 1988.

closely held. In emergencies, when the need for action was absolutely clear (such as a Communist attack on Taiwan) and could not await Presidential deliberation, certain escalatory decisions (such as conventional air strikes on the mainland) were delegated to JCS. On the other hand, decisions on the details of executing operations previously approved by the President were delegated to on-scene commanders.

The second question is were the forces of the two sides at the scene of the crisis tightly coupled with each other? Both sides appeared to have good intelligence concerning the other side's forces and operations. The Taiwan Defense Command observed that the pattern of Communist Chinese shelling suggested that they had good intelligence on the convoys.[82] Chinese protests of alleged U.S. violations of their airspace and territorial waters also suggests that they were able to keep close tabs on U.S. navy operations in the Straits. U.S. on-scene commanders had similarly good information on Communist military activities. The Taiwan Patrol Force maintained intensive patrol and surveillance of the mainland coast. However, detection of actions by the other side did not automatically generate tactical reactions. The United States and Communist China both took steps to prevent clashes between

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[82] Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," p. 304.

their forces and those measures largely prevented interactions from occurring. When U.S. and Communist forces came into contact, as in the Hopewell and McGinty episodes, they disengaged rather than fighting. Thus, although the intelligence requirement for tight coupling of the two sides' forces was met, tactical reactions tended to be dampened by measures taken to avoid clashes.

The third question is were the forces of the two sides being used by their national leaders as a political instrument in the crisis? Both Communist China and the United States were using their forces for political purposes as well as military purposes. Communist China was conducting a limited probe of an ambiguous American commitment to the offshore islands, and exerting carefully controlled pressure on the Nationalists and the United States. The United States responded by accepting a test of capabilities under the ground rules established by the Chinese Communists, backed by a massive concentration of naval and air power in the Straits to convey a strong deterrent threat. Faced with a choice between escalating the confrontation or accepting an unfavorable outcome, the Chinese backed down and salvaged as much as they could politically.

The answers to these first three questions suggest that conditions necessary for stratified interaction existed in the 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis: the United States relied on methods of delegated control, U.S. and Chinese Communist military forces were tightly coupled, and both sides used their forces as a political instrument under conditions of acute crisis. Interactions occurred at the tactical level that were not directly controlled by American leaders. For example, President Eisenhower had no control over the actions of the destroyer <u>Hopewell</u> on August 24. The findings of this case suggest, however, that stratification is not an absolute concept--there can be degrees of stratification. Measures taken by both sides to prevent confrontations between their forces can greatly reduce opportunities for tactical-level interaction to occur.

The fourth question is did crisis interactions at the tactical level become decoupled from the strategy being pursued by national leaders? Three of the potential causes of decoupling arose on the American side in the crisis: communications problems, a fast-paced tactical environment, and ambiguous orders. The communications problems have already been discussed. When the President suspended convoy escort operations on October 6 in response to the Communist unilateral ceasefire announcement, the order was not received by Commander Taiwan Patrol Force until after two more Nationalist convoys had been escorted on October 7.[83]

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[83] "Taiwan Patrol Force Review," Enclosure 1, p. 8. In fact, the Commander of the U.S. Taiwan Defense Command initially responded to the Communist ceasefire by informing his forces on October 6 that it did not change their orders.

As it turned out, the extra day of escort operations did not adversely affect U.S. efforts to resolve the crisis, but it could have had a much more serious impact--the Chinese Communists had made the ceasefire contingent on the U.S. not escorting Nationalist convoys. This was the most serious instance of decoupling in the crisis.

The impact of a fast-paced tactical environment and ambiguous orders were most apparent on August 24, the first full day of the crisis. It would be August 26 before the on-scene commanders received the first JCS directive on the crisis, but they had to respond immediately to a Communist Chinese threat of unknown proportions. In the early hours of the crisis it was not clear whether the Communists intended to attack Taiwan, invade Quemoy or neighboring islands, or just harass the offshore islands with artillery fire. The Nationalists were appealing for assistance to repel an invasion of one of the islands. Compounding this rapidly evolving situation was the ambiguous Eisenhower Administration policy toward defense of the offshore islands. U.S. military commanders in the Pacific had sought clarification on the offshore islands earlier in August as tensions rose in the Straits, but the President was unwilling to state a definitive policy until September 6. On-scene commanders had ample authority to take military action under the terms of the defense treaty with the Nationalists and the Formosa Resolution if Taiwan were threatened, but initially had no specific guidance on the offshore islands. Commander Seventh Fleet and the Chief of Staff at CINCPAC would later complain about this lack of guidance from Washington.[84] Left to their own devices, the on-scene commanders took actions on August 24 and 25--sending U.S. destroyers to the assistance of Nationalist forces defending the offshore islands--that the President may not have authorized had he been able to make the decisions himself. This is another example of decoupling during the crisis.

The fifth question is did national leaders and on-scene commanders hold different perceptions of the vulnerability of on-scene forces to pre-emption and the need to strike first in the event of an armed clash? This appears not to have been a significant problem in the 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis. The entire chain of command, from the President down to commanding officers at sea in the Straits, appear to have been aware of the danger of incidents with Communist Chinese forces. The emphasis in JCS operational directives was on avoiding clashes with the Communists, and on-scene commanders took similar measures on their own initiative. These steps had the effect of

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[84] Riley, "Reminiscences," p. 630; Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," p. 133. Vice Admiral Blackburn also states that he was not kept informed of U.S. political objectives and diplomatic initiatives during the crisis. Blackburn, letter to author, May 30, 1988.

preventing U.S. forces from operating in the sights of Communist guns, thus reducing their vulnerability to preemption by the Communists. Although some U.S. commanders in the Far East may have wanted to take more vigorous action against Communist China, they did not perceive a significantly greater threat to U.S. forces than did officials in Washington. Thus, the security dilemma was not stratified.

The sixth question is, when tactical-level interactions become decoupled, what factors inhibit escalation dynamics from occurring at the tactical level and being transmitted upward to the strategic and political levels of interaction? In the 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis, when decoupling occurred it did not produce tactical-level escalation. Instead, interactions remained at a relatively low intensity and when U.S. and Communist forces did come in contact, they quickly disengaged. There appear to have been two reasons for this. First, U.S. on-scene commanders exercised caution in the absence of guidance from higher authority. For example, Commander Taiwan Defense Command and Commander Taiwan Patrol Force initially ordered ships to remain twelve miles from the mainland and aircraft to remain twenty miles from the mainland--a policy more restrictive than that approved by the President later. This tactical-level prudence compensated for lack of operational guidance when decoupling occurred, preventing escalation even when actions took place that the President had not ordered.

The second factor inhibiting escalation was that both sides took steps to avoid military clashes and adhered to the tacit ground rules for the test of capabilities between their forces. Those ground rules included no Communist attacks on U.S. forces, no U.S. attacks on Chinese forces except in self-defense (and defense of Nationalist forces in international airspace or waters), and no U.S. attacks on the Chinese mainland. The CNO, Admiral Arleigh Burke, pointed this out in 1959 testimony to Congress:

> As this situation generated, we sort of abided by rules of the other side, and they abided by our rules. They were very careful never to come out to sea, beyond their own coastline. We were careful not to go beyond their coastline, too, so that we sort of had an unofficial agreement and nothing happened.[85]

Vice Admiral Blackburn, Commander of the Taiwan Patrol Force, states that "Our people were instructed to avoid confrontations, and apparently the ChiComs had similar ground rules, as they would break off contact when a confrontation appeared imminent."[86] This is exactly what happended in the <u>Hopewell</u> and <u>McGinty</u> incidents.

J.H. Kalicki argues that a Sino-American "crisis system" evolved during the 1950s. In this system, "the life cycle of each crisis became increasingly self-regulated" and

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[85] U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, <u>Disarmament and Foreign Policy</u>, Hearings, 86th Congress, 1st Session, Part 1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 98. Also see Young, pp. 224-29; Williams, pp. 112-13.

[86] Blackburn, letter to author, May 30, 1988.

"the ability of each actor to handle crises with the other became increasingly sophisticated."[87] Both sides, he contends, learned to respect the other's commitments, limiting their interactions to probes confirm-ing the strength of those commitments. He also argues that American and Chinese leaders improved their skills as crisis managers, orchestrating actions with words more sensibly and imaginatively, and sending more effective signals.[88] This study of tactical-level military interactions in the 1958 crisis--the last major crisis in the period studied by Kalicki--supports his view that the United States and Communist China had evolved tacit rules of crisis behavior.

The seventh question is did actions taken with military forces send inadvertent signals to either adversaries or friends, and did inadvertent military incidents occur that affected efforts to manage the crisis? This appears not to have been a serious problem during the 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis. The military moves taken by each side were carefully designed to signal their intentions.

The principle problem that the United States experienced arose from the ambiguity of the Eisenhower Administration's commitment to the defense of the offshore

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[87] Kalicki, p. 213.

[88] Ibid, pp. 213-215.

islands. U.S. leaders were caught between deterring an adversary and restraining an ally: too strong a commitment might encourage the Nationalists to be overly aggressive, while too weak a commitment might encourage the Communists to be overly aggressive. The Eisenhower Administration attempted to resolve this dilemma with a calculated policy of ambiguity, but only prompted the Communist probe of the American commitment and subsequent efforts by the Nationalists to use the crisis as grounds for striking back at the mainland. The problem was not that the Communists and Nationalists misperceived U.S. intentions, but rather that they correctly perceived the ambivalence in U.S. policy.

The final question is did any of the three tensions between political and military considerations arise during the crisis? All three of the tensions arose in the crisis, but none was severe. Tension between political considerations and military considerations arose in the restrictions placed on the support that could be provided for the Quemoy resupply effort. The most efficient way of resupplying the Nationalist garrison would have been to carry their supplies in U.S. amphibious ships escorted right up to the beach by U.S. warships. However, this would have been a serious provocation to the Communists, who might not have refrained from shelling the American vessels. That, in turn, probably would have led to U.S. naval bombardment and air strikes against Communist shore batteries, air fields, and naval bases. The political restrictions on the resupply operation were thus prudent from a crisis management perspective, even if they required the U.S. and Nationalist navies to improvise ways to get supplies ashore under fire.

Tension arose between the need for top-level control and the need for on-scene flexibility and initiative, but overall a workable balance appears to have been struck. President Eisenhower implies in his memoirs that he was satisfied with command arrangements during the crisis.[89] Efforts by officials in Washington to manage the crisis were hampered by lack of information from the field, prompting the CNO to increase reporting requirements and send several queries to commanders in the Far East. Rear Admiral Smoot made several requests for authority to make decisions himself rather than having to refer them to Washington, some of which were granted.[90] According the Vice Admiral Heyward (on the CNO's staff), minor tensions arose within the Navy chain of command due to Admiral Burke's operational style: "Admiral Burke was a 'hands on' CNO, so he may have exercised a little more detailed control of operations of the naval forces involved than Admiral Felt or COMSEVENTHFLT desired."[91] That this was the case is confirmed by Vice

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[89] Eisenhower, p. 299.

[90] Smoot, "Reminiscences," pp. 313-16; Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," pp. 155, 249-50, 365, 370.

[91] Heyward, letter to author, May 27, 1988.

Admiral Beakley's comments on "trying to keep up with answers to dispatches from Washington."[92] However, methods of delegated control were used and officials in Washington relied heavily on mechanisms of indirect control, thus muting tension over centralization of control.

Tensions arose between performance of crisis missions and readiness to perform wartime missions. The Politico-Military Policy Division of the CNO's staff prepared a position paper on August 24 in which the President was warned that "The United States must undertake operations which bring action to a halt quickly. Prolonged operations will diminish military capabilities for operations in other areas or for general war."[93] Transferring the attack carrier Essex from the Mediterranean to the Western Pacific illustrates this problem: it reinforced the forces around Taiwan but reduced U.S. strength on NATO's southern flank and in the Middle East. The CNO refused to authorize similar actions that would have further drawn down Atlantic Fleet strength. After the crisis, Admiral Burke would testify that U.S. naval forces were "stretched pretty thin" during the crisis and would have been hard pressed to respond to an outbreak of fighting elsewhere while committed

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[92] Beakley, letter to VADM A.M. Pride, September 8, 1958.

[93] Quoted in Halperin, "The 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis," p. 110.

in the Taiwan Straits.[94] The CINCPACFLT assessment of the crisis praised the ability of naval forces to rapidly augment the defense of Taiwan, but closed with a warning: "However, as a corollary, it is also considered that such augmentation is expensive and results in long lasting deleterious effects upon material and personnel."[95] Thus, tensions between crisis missions and readiness for wartime missions arose during the Taiwan Straits operations. Of the three types of political-military tensions, this one was the most serious during the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis.

The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis

The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis erupted in October when American U-2 high-altitude reconnaissance planes photographed Soviet medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM) and intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) sites under construction in Cuba. The United States responded by demanding that the missiles be withdrawn, imposing a naval quarantine of offensive arms shipments to Cuba, preparing to launch air strikes against the sites and an invasion of Cuba, and alerting its strategic nucear forces. After a

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[94] "CNO Summary of Action," pp. 2-3; "CNO Congressional Testimony," pp. 106-7

[95] "CINCPACFLT Annual Report," p. 1. Vice Admiral Beakley, Commander Seventh Fleet, expressed concern in the letter quoted previously that the attack carriers off Taiwan would start breaking down if kept on the line for too long without maintenance. See footnote 72.

tense week of diplomatic bargaining, Moscow agreed to withdraw its offensive missiles in exchange for a pledge from Washington to not invade Cuba and an informal understanding that the U.S. would later withdraw its MRBMs from Turkey. The United States Navy played a prominent role in the crisis, enforcing the quarantine and carrying out a wide range of operations in support of President Kennedy's strategy.

Background

Soviet-American relations had begun to improve in 1959, marked by the "spirit of Camp David" engendered during Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev's September visit to the United States. This tentative thaw in the cold war ended in May 1960, when Khrushchev walked out of the Paris Four-Power summit meeting. Khrushchev had demanded that the United States apologize for violating Soviet airspace with the U-2 that the Soviets had shot down on May 1, 1960. When President Eisenhower refused, Khrushchev scuttled the summit meeting.[96] John F. Kennedy won the presidential election in November 1960, running on a platform that included a promise to close the "missile gap" alleged to exist with the Soviet Union. In his inaugural address in January, Kennedy

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[96] Michael R. Breschloss, Mayday: Eisenhower, Khrushchev and the U-2 Affair (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), pp. 273-304;

declared that the United States would "pay any cost, bear any burden" in the defense of freedom. This came two weeks after Khrushchev had announced a Soviet commitment to support "wars of national liberation" in the Third World. Thus, the ideological and political confrontation between the superpowers would continue in the new Administration.

The Kennedy Administration soon discovered that there was no missile gap with the Soviet Union and that the United states in fact held a lead in strategic nuclear forces. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara revealed that there was no missile gap on February 8, 1961. Khrushchev's intercontinental ballistic missile claims had largely been a bluff--the Soviets had few ICBMs and was producing them at a low rate. Nevertheless, the Kennedy Administration launched an ambitious program to strengthen U.S. strategic forces with Minuteman ICBMs and Polaris submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). As a result of this program, U.S. strategic nuclear superiority over the Soviets would continue to grow.[97]

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[97] William W. Kaufmann, The McNamara Strategy (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), pp. 38-50; Roger Hilsman, To Move A Nation (New York: Doubleday, 1967), pp. 162-4; Edgar M. Bottome, The Missile Gap: A Study of the Formulation of Military and Political Policy (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1971); Jerome H. Kahan, Security in the Nuclear Age: Developing U.S. Strategic Arms Policy (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1975), pp. 84-94; John Prados, The Soviet Estimate: U.S. Intelligence Analysis and Soviet Strategic Forces (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 75-95, 111-22; George and Smoke, pp. 449-56.

The Kennedy Administration faced two major crises in 1961. The first was the "Bay of Pigs" humiliation in April. American relations with Cuba had been deteriorating since Fidel Castro overthrew the Batista dictatorship in January 1959. As Castro imposed a Communist dictatorship on Cuba and turned to the Soviet bloc for political support and economic and military aid, pressure grew in the United States to take action against him. This led to the CIA plan to mount an invasion by anti-Castro exiles, which was well along when Kennedy came into office. The attempted invasion failed, with most of the exile force killed or captured, producing a propaganda triumph for Castro. President Kennedy admitted U.S. complicity in the invasion accepted responsibility for the disaster. This did not, however, mark the end of U.S. opposition to Castro. Soon after the Bay of Pigs episode the Kennedy Administration established a Cuban Coordinating Committee chaired by Attorney general Robert Kennedy to explore actions that could be taken against Castro. The CIA launched "Operation Mongoose," a series of guerrilla raids by Cuban exiles. Additionally, the Joint Chiefs were directed to prepare contingency plans for air strikes and invasion of Cuba.[98] Thus, Cuba was high

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[98] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), pp. 215-97; Haynes Johnson, The Bay of Pigs (New York: W.W. Norton, 1964); Peter Wyden, Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979). On anti-Castro

on the Kennedy Administration's list of foreign policy concerns.

The second crisis faced by the Kennedy Administration was in Berlin. Berlin had been on the Soviet foreign policy agenda since 1948. In response to Britain, France and the United States unifying West Germany, which the Soviets viewed as a first step toward a separate Western peace with Germany in violation of the Potsdam agreement, the Soviets cut off rail and road access to Berlin in June 1948. The blockade was broken by the Berlin airlift and was lifted in May 1949. In November 1958 Khrushchev had given the West six months to withdraw from Berlin and sign a German peace treaty. The Western powers rejected the Soviet demand, which was dropped during Khrushchev's May 1959 visit to the United States. Khrushchev took a hard line on Berlin when he met Kennedy in Vienna in June 1961 and on July 8, 1961 demanded that the Western powers withdraw from the city. The West refused, and in August the Soviets and East Germans began erecting the Berlin Wall around the Western occupation sectors of the city. The crisis then tapered off without resolution of the issues that had provoked it. The crisis further strained Soviet-American relations and led the

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activities, see Captain Alex A. Kerr, "The Reminiscences of Captain Alex A. Kerr, U.S. Navy (Retired)," (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, Oral History Program, 1984), pp. 404-7; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy and His Times (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978), pp. 468-98.

Kennedy Administration to expect the Soviets to make another move against Berlin in the near future.[99]

In 1962 Kennedy Administration attention shifted back to Cuba. In January, at the Punta del Este Conference of the Organization of American States (OAS), the United States persuaded the OAS to declare its opposition to Cuban revolutionary activity in Latin America. On February 4, 1962, President Kennedy declared an embargo on all trade with Cuba other than medical supplies. Meanwhile, Cuba and the Soviet Union were forging closer ties. Osmoni Cienfuegos, Cuban Minister of Public Works, visited Moscow in April, Raul Castro, Minister of Defense, visited Moscow in early July, and Che Guevara, Minister of Finance, visited Moscow in late August. These visits produced Soviet pledges of economic and military assistance.

The Cuban Military Build-up

In mid-July ships carrying arms destined for Cuba began leaving Soviet ports. The military build-up on Cuba was dramatic and immediately detected by the United States.

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[99] See Adam B. Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-72, Second Edition (New York: Praeger, 1974), pp. 440-55, 619-20, 653-4; Jean Edward Smith, The Defense of Berlin (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1963); Jack M. Schick, The Berlin Crisis, 1958-1962 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971); Robert M. Slusser, The Berlin Crisis of 1961 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, pp. 343-405; Theodore C. Sorenson, Kennedy (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 668-9.

The number of Soviet freighters (dry cargo ships) arriving in Cuban ports, which had averaged about 15 ships a month during the first seven months of 1962, suddenly increased to 37 in August and 46 in September. Additionally, four to six passenger ships arrived per month in July, August and September, each carrying hundreds of Soviet technicians, troops, and support personnel. U.S. intelligence estimates were that the Soviets had 3,000-5,000 personnel in Cuba by the end of September. The Soviets supplied the Cubans with Mig-21 jet fighters, tanks, radar-controlled anti-aircraft guns, short-range conventional tactical ballistic missiles (FROG-type), coastal defense anti-ship cruise missiles, Komar-class fast attack craft armed with SS-N-2 anti-ship cruise missiles, and extensive radar and communications equipment. On August 29 U-2 photographs confirmed SA-2 Guideline surface-to-air missile sites in Cuba. An August 22 CIA Current Intelligence Memorandum on Soviet military aid to Cuba concluded that "Together with the extraordinary Soviet bloc economic commitments made to Cuba in recent months, these developments amount to the most extensive campaign to bolster a non-bloc country ever undertaken by the USSR."[100]

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[100] Central Intelligence Agency, Current Intelligence Memorandum, "Recent Soviet Military Aid to Cuba," August 22, 1962 (National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file). Also see Central Intelligence Agency, Special National Intelligence Estimate 85-3-62, "The Military Buildup in Cuba," September 19, 1962 (National Security

The United States closely monitored the military build-up in Cuba. In early August the United States stepped up its surveillance of Cuba and Soviet bloc shipping to the island. This included photographic reconnaissance of all Soviet bloc shipping to Cuba, frequent peripheral photographic reconnaissance flights around the island, twice-monthly U-2 flights over the island, and assignment of the intelligence collection ship USS Oxford (AG 159) to monitor Cuba. The CIA and NSC prepared detailed studies of the intentions and implications of the build-up, and in late August the CIA began issuing daily intelligence reports on Soviet arms shipments to Cuba.[101]

Archives, Washington, DC, Cuba file, Record no. 1714); U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Armed Services, Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee, "Interim Report on the Cuban Military Buildup," 88th Congress, 1st Session (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963), pp. 5-8 (Cited hereafter as Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee Interim Report); Commander in Chief Atlantic, "CINCLANT Historical Account of Cuban Crisis 1962," April 29, 1963 (declassified 1986), pp. 4-9 (Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC. Cited hereafter as "CINCLANT Historical Account."); National Indications Center, "The Soviet Bloc Armed Forces and the Cuban Crisis: A Chronology, July-November 1962," June 18, 1963 (declassified 1985), pp. 1-7 (National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file. Cited hereafter as "National Indications Center").

[101] National Indications Center, pp. 6-7, 13; Hilsman, p. 170; Schlesinger, Robert Kennedy, p. 505; Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, "The Naval Quarantine of Cuba," December 1962 (partially declassified 1984), pp. 1-2 (Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC. Cited hereafter as "CNO Historical Narrative."); USS Oxford (AG 159), Ship's History, January 25, 1963 (Ships History Branch, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC).

The Kennedy Administration drew a distinction between offensive and defensive weapons: Offensive weapons were those that could strike U.S. territory from Cuba, and included surface-to-surface missiles (MRBMs and IRBMs) and bombers. All other weapons, including the surface-to-air missiles and anti-ship cruise missiles, were considered defensive. President Kennedy made public statements on September 4 and 13 describing the buildup of defensive arms in Cuba and warning that the United States would not tolerate offensive arms there. Additionally, U.S. officials discussed the arms build-up directly with Soviet officials, and were told on at least three occasions that the arms were strictly defensive.[102] In retrospect, the Kennedy Administration's effort to draw a distinction between offensive and defensive weapons appears not to have eliminated the ambiguity inherent in such matters. Khrushchev would later claim that Soviet missiles were deployed in Cuba to defend the island against the threat of U.S. invasion--reflecting an offense-defense distinction based on political intent rather than the capability of the weapons.

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[102] See "U.S. Reaffirms Policy on Prevention of Aggressive Actions by Cuba: Statement by President Kennedy," Department of State Bulletin 47 (September 24, 1962), p. 450; "The President's News Conference of September 13, 1962," Public Papers of the Presidents: John F. Kennedy, 1962 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 674. On the meetings with Soviet officials, see Sorenson, Kennedy, pp. 667-9; Raymond L. Garthoff, Reflections on the Cuban Missile Crisis (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1987), p. 15; Hilsman, pp. 166-67.

Meanwhile, the Soviet Union was covertly deploying offensive missiles to Cuba. Khrushchev apparently proposed the idea of deploying offensive missiles to Cuba sometime between late April and late May of 1962. By early July Cuba had agreed to allow the missiles on its soil, plans for the deployment had been completed, and launch sites had been identified.[103] The initial Soviet missile deployment plan is summarized in Table 1. The Soviets planned initially to deploy 24 launchers for SS-4 (Soviet designation "R-12") Sandal 1,100-mile range MRBMs with two missiles per launcher, for a total of 48 MRBMs, and 16 launchers for SS-5 (Soviet designation "R-14") Skean 2,200-mile range IRBMs with two missiles per launcher, for a total of 32 IRBMs. Of this missile force, only 42 MRBMs were actually deployed to Cuba before the United States imposed the quarantine on offensive weapons. Additionally, the Soviets deployed 42 IL-28 Beagle twin-engine light bombers to Cuba.[104] These were

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[103] There are a wide range of estimates as to when the decision was made. Khrushchev states in his memoirs that it was during a May 14-20, 1962, visit to Bulgaria that the idea of deploying nuclear missiles to Cuba occurred to him. See Nikita S. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, translated and edited by Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970), p. 493. For discussions of the Soviet decision, see Michael Tatu, Power in the Kremlin: From Khrushchev to Kosygin (New York: Viking Press, 1969), pp. 233-39; Hilsman, To Move a Nation, pp. 159-61; Garthoff, Reflections, pp. 6-8.

[104] Central Intelligence Agency, Memorandum, "The Crisis USSR/Cuba: Information as of 0600," October 28, 1962, pp. I-1, I-4 (National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file); Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 796; Hilsman, p. 159; Garthoff, Reflections, pp. 19-20.

regarded as offensive weapons by the United States because they had sufficient range to reach U.S. territory and theoretically could carry nuclear bombs.

Table 1
Soviet Missile Deployment Plan

Site	Type	Launchers	Missiles
San Cristobal site no. 1	MRBM	4	8
San Cristobal site no. 2	MRBM	4	8
San Cristobal site no. 3	MRBM	4	8
San Cristobal site no. 4	MRBM	4	8
Sagua la Grande site no. 1	MRBM	4	8
Sagua la Grande site no. 2	MRBM	4	8
Guanajay site no. 1	IRBM	4	8
Guanajay site no. 2	IRBM	4	8
Remedios site no. 1	IRBM	4	8
Remedios site no. 2	IRBM	4	8

Sources: Central Intelligence Agency, Memorandum, "The Crisis USSR/Cuba: Information as of 0600," October 28, 1962, pp. I-1, I-4; Garthoff, Reflections, pp. 19-20; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 796; Hilsman, p. 159.

In late July Cuba began evacuating residents from the ports at which the missiles would arrive and in early August the Soviets began establishing their own security zones at those ports, including construction of fences and guard posts. In mid-August equipment for construction of the launch sites began arriving in Cuba and in late August clearing of roads and launch areas started at the Sagua la Grande MRBM sites. In early September MRBM and IRBM associated equipment began arriving in Cuban ports. The first MRBMs appear to have arrived in the Cuban port of

Casilda on September 8 and were delivered to Sagua la Grande by September 15. Also in early September construction began at the Guanajay IRBM sites and Cuban residents were evicted from what would become the San Cristobal MRBM sites. In mid-September construction began at one of the two Remedios IRBM sites and clearing of roads and launch areas started at the San Cristobal MRBM sites. The second shipment of MRBMs appears to have arrived in the Cuban port of Mariel on September 15 for delivery to San Cristobal.[105] Soviet deployment of offensive missiles in Cuba was thus well along by mid-September.

The Soviets sought to mask their deployment of offensive missiles to Cuba with what Roger Hilsman has described as a program of "cover and deception." From the Soviet-Cuban communique released on September 2 at the end of Che Guevara's visit to Moscow, to Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko's meeting with President Kennedy on October 18, the Soviets on at least eight occasions stated that they were sending only defensive weapons to Cuba.[106]

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[105] National Indications Center, pp. 1-7, 13-15; Hilsman, pp. 183-6; Garthoff, Reflections, pp. 19-20; Elie Abel, The Missile Crisis (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1966), pp. 41-2. The one serious disagreement among these accounts is that Hilsman states construction started at Sagua la Grande in late September, while the National Indications Center report states it started in late August.

[106] Garthoff, Reflections, p. 15. Also see Hilsman, pp. 165-7; National Indications Center, pp. 13-14; Sorenson, pp. 667-8, 690; Abel, pp. 37-8, 61-3; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, pp. 798-9, 805.

U.S. Suspicions and Preparations

The United States was slow in coming to the realization that the Soviet Union was deploying offensive missiles in Cuba. Although a few officials, particularly CIA Director John A. McCone, had concluded as early as July 1962 that the build-up of defensive forces in Cuba was for the defense of offensive weapons to be introduced later, the consensus among the President's advisors and intelligence officials in the CIA and State Department was that the Soviets would not put offensive missiles in Cuba.[107] A Special National Intelligence Estimate issued September 19, 1962, concluded that the Soviets would be unlikely to place MRBMs and IRBMs in Cuba because it would be "incompatible with Soviet practice to date" and would indicate "a far greater willingness to increase the level of risk in US-Soviet relations than the USSR has displayed thus far."[108]

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[107] On McCone's warning, see Arthur Krock, Memoirs: Sixty Years on the Firing Line (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1968), pp. 378-80. Robert Kennedy and Roger Hilsman contend McCone never expressed his concern to the President. See Schlesinger, Robert Kennedy, p. 506; Hilsman, p. 173. On the view that the Soviets would not put offensive missiles in Cuba, see Sorenson, p. 670; Hilsman, pp. 172-3; Abel, p. 5; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 798; George and Smoke, pp. 477-81; Garthoff, Reflections, p. 26. Robert Kennedy apparently anticipated in April 1961 and September 1962 that the Soviets might put offensive missiles in Cuba. See Schlesinger, Robert Kennedy, pp. 471, 505.

[108] Central Intelligence Agency, Special National Intelligence Estimate 85-3-62, "The Military Buildup in Cuba," September 19, 1962 (National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file), p. 2.

Controversy has persisted over the causes of this intelligence failure. Robert Kennedy stated in his memoir of the crisis that "No one had expected or anticipated that the Russians would deploy surface-to-surface missiles in Cuba."[109] There are two explanations for this. Roger Hilsman contends that the U.S. did not have accurate and reliable intelligence on the Soviet missiles until the October 14 U-2 photographs. The opposing argument is that there were numerous indicators of the Soviet move, but U.S. analysts, working under an erroneous conception of Soviet behavior and perceptions, ignored or misconstrued evidence contradicting their belief that the Soviets would not put offensive arms in Cuba. The two sides agree, however, that the Kennedy Administration was taken by surprise and caught unprepared when the Soviet missiles were discovered on October 14.[110]

The U.S. may not have had accurate and reliable intelligence, but there were several pieces of evidence that should have raised suspicion that the Soviets were placing offensive missiles in Cuba. In fact, the available evidence

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[97] Robert F. Kennedy, Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), p. 24.

[98] Hilsman, pp. 159-92; also see Sorenson, p. 675. On the intelligence failure argument, see Klaus Knorr, "Failures in National Intelligence Estimates: The Case of the Cuban Missiles," World Politics 16 (April 1964): 455-67; Roberta Wohlstetter, "Cuba and Pearl Harbor: Hindsight and Foresight," Foreign Affairs 43 (July 1965): 691-707; George and Smoke, pp. 477-81.

did raise suspicions among some analysts and officials, but those suspicions were not taken seriously by officials with access to the President. On the other hand, contrary to the intelligence failure argument, the Kennedy Administration did anticipate the possibility that offensive weapons might be placed in Cuba and initiated actions to prepare for that possibility. The pattern was a gradual accumulation of ambiguous intelligence that the arms build-up in Cuba could pose an offensive threat to the United States, accompanied by a search for confirmation that offensive weapons were being deployed in Cuba and a series of low-level preparations to counter that possibility. This pattern--gradual accumulation of intelligence, search for confirmation, and low-level preparations for action--strongly influenced the manner in which the crisis was handled after the discovery of MRBMs on October 14.

In late August 1962, the United States began receiving reports out of Cuba on construction and preparations for installation of MRBMs. The reports lacked details positively linking the activities with offensive missiles, so were assessed as related to the build-up of defensive arms. After mid-September, as the Sieverts Report notes, "a few reports, of varying reliability and precision, were suggestive enough to arouse suspicions."[111] The Preparedness

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[111] Frank A. Sieverts, "The Cuban Crisis, 1962," Department of State, Washington, DC, August 22, 1963

Investigating Subcommittee's report on the Cuban military build-up states that these intelligence reports "resulted in the conclusion--apparently reached near the end of September 1962--that there was a suspect medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM) site in Pinar del Rio Province."[112] This led, on October 4, to the Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance (COMOR) designating western Cuba highest priority for U-2 overflight.[113] Thus, although the fragmentary and ambiguous

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(declassified 1984), pp. 11-12 (Cited hereafter as "Sieverts Report"). Allegations have been made that reports from Cuban exiles and agents in Cuba--ignored or given little credence at the time--in fact provided significant evidence that offensive missiles were in Cuba. See James Monahan and Kenneth O. Gilmore, The Great Deception (New York: Farrar and Strauss, 1963), pp.201-5; Philippe L. Thiraud de Vosjoli, "A Head That Holds Some Sinister Secrets," Life, April 26, 1964, p. 35; Forrest R. Johns, "Naval Quarantine of Cuba, 1962," (Masters thesis, University of California San Diego, 1984), pp. 43-46, 66-67. For explanations why reports out of Cuba were discounted, see Maxwell D. Taylor, Swords and Ploughshares (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), p. 263; Henry M. Pachter, Collision Course: The Cuban Missile Crisis and Coexistence (New York: Praeger, 1963), p. 8; Abel, pp. 40-41; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 800; Robert Kennedy, pp. 28-29.

[112] Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee Interim Report, p. 7.

[113] Hilsman, pp. 175-76; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 800; Abel, p. 15. To avoid the threat of an international incident arising from a U-2 being downed by Soviet SAMs, the President had directed on September 10 that U-2 flights not be conducted over known SAM sites in western Cuba. See Hilsman, p. 173-74; Abel, p. 14. Consequently, western Cuba had not been overflown since September 5. By designating western Cuba highest priority for U-2 flights, COMOR was recommending that the ban on flights over SAM sites be rescinded. On October 9 this recommendation was taken to the President, who approved flights over western Cuba. See Hilsman, p. 176; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 801; Sorenson, p. 672; George and Smoke, pp. 475-77.

intelligence on offensive missiles that was received in August and September failed to sway the President's advisors from their belief that the Soviets would not deploy offensive weapons in Cuba, it was carefully assessed and used to focus the search for photographic confirmation of the missiles.

Intelligence analysts in the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the military services appear to have concluded by the end of September that the Soviet Union would soon deploy offensive missiles in Cuba. Aviation Week and Space Technology reported on October 1 that "Pentagon strategists consider the present arms buildup in Cuba the first step toward eventual construction of intermediate-range ballistic missile emplacements."[114] That same day, during a regular weekly JCS meeting attended by Secretary of Defense McNamara, DIA photographic intelligence analyst Colonel John R. Wright, Jr., presented a briefing on his assessment that the Soviets were preparing a launch site for offensive missiles in the San Cristobal area.[115] Vice

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[114] "U.S. Watches for Possible Cuban IRBMs," Aviation Week and Space Technology, October 1, 1962, p. 20.

[115] Johns, "Naval Quarantine," p. 73. He contends Colonel Wright presented photographs from the September 26 and 29 U-2 flights of construction at the Sagua la Grande MRBM site and Remedios IRBM site. Admiral George W. Anderson, Chief of Naval Operations in 1962, has stated "I first saw the photographic intelligence showing that the missiles were in Cuba on about 1 October." See Admiral George W. Anderson, "As I Recall...The Cuban Missile Crisis," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 113 (September

Admiral Herbert D. Riley, Director of the Joint Staff in 1962, stated in his oral history that by early October the Joint Staff was convinced the Soviets had deployed offensive missiles in Cuba: "We knew three weeks before it ever came out to the public in general what was going on down there, that there were missile sites. The military got the information and passed it on to the Chiefs and to the White House, and they sat on it for a while hoping it would go away. . . . But we had beautiful pictures of these sites and the stuff going in."[116] Although, as Vice Admiral Riley suggests, forceful action was not taken immediately, McNamara and the Joint Chiefs did commence a wide range of low-level actions to increase U.S. readiness for military action against Cuba.

U.S. Navy surveillance of Soviet bloc shipping to Cuba also appears to have raised suspicions--at least among the senior Navy leadership--that the Soviets were deploying

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1987): 44. However, Arthur C. Lundahl, Director of the CIA's National Photographic Intelligence Center in 1962, states that U-2 photographs taken prior to October 14 did not reveal the presence of MRBM sites. Lundahl, interview by author, April 28, 1988. Also see Hilsman, p. 174; Sorenson, pp. 674-75; Abel, p. 14; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 799. Colonel Wright probably presented to the JCS the same briefing he would give to the COMOR three days later. In the COMOR briefing, he pointed out that the pattern of SA-2 SAM deployments in the San Cristobal area seen in U-2 photographs taken September 5 resembled the pattern seen around MRBM/IRBM sites in the Soviet Union. See Hilsman, pp. 176, 181; Abel, p. 26. These are probably the photographs recalled by Admiral Anderson.

[116] Riley, "Reminiscences," p. 756.

offensive missiles to Cuba. Hilsman contends that "Shipping intelligence did not reveal the contents of the ships," and that the significance of ships with hatches large enough to accommodate MRBMs arriving in Cuba riding high in the water (thus carrying a high-volume, low-weight cargo) was not realized until after the MRBMs were discovered in Cuba.[117] However, there is persuasive evidence that shipping intelligence did in fact provide important clues that offensive missiles were en route to Cuba.

The history of the Cuban Missile Crisis prepared by the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations states that the intelligence on offensive missiles included "descriptions of suspicious cargoes aboard Cuba-bound ships, obtained from sources at ports of loading and unloading."[118] Suspicions that the Soviet ships were delivering offensive missiles were strong among the Navy's leadership, including the CNO (Admiral Anderson), the director of the Joint Staff (Vice Admiral Riley), the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Fleet Operations and Readiness (Vice Admiral Charles D. Griffin), and the Secretary to the JCS (Vice Admiral Francis J. Blouin).[119]

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[117] Hilsman, pp. 167, 186-87.

[118] CNO Historical Narrative, p. 2.

[119] Admiral Anderson, interview by author, January 25, 1988; Riley, "Reminiscences," p. 756; Admiral Charles D. Griffin, letter to author, April 6, 1988; Vice Admiral Francis J. Blouin, letter to author, March 1, 1988.

Vice Admiral Turner F. Caldwell, Director of the Strategic Plans Division of the CNO's staff in 1962, has described the Navy's suspicions:

> OPNAV [the CNO's staff] as a whole, or rather the pertinent parts (as opposed to individuals such as myself), became overtly suspicious of Russian intentions in about the middle of July 1962. My personal suspicions had been aroused earlier, say May. The pattern of Russian ship movements to Cuba altered in the spring. The presence of construction equipment as deck cargo indicated large-scale construction to be contemplated. My personal opinion was that nuclear missiles would be introduced. I set up an informal committee, with representatives from DCNO (Operations) [Deputy CNO for Operations], DCNO (Logistics) [Deputy CNO for Logistics] and a couple others. All our procedures were oral, there was no written record. I made several presentations to the CNO at his weekly DCNO conference.[120]

Thus, the Navy's top leadership was being appraised on a regular basis of suspicions and evidence that the Soviets were deploying offensive missiles to Cuba.

Navy suspicions were based largely on evidence gained through shipping intelligence. Offensive missiles and missile-associated equipment apparently were photographed <u>on the decks</u> of Soviet ships bound for Cuba. The 1963 CINCLANT history of the crisis states "Strategic material was photographed inbound to Cuba but was not associated with the buildup of offensive weapons until just prior to October, when intelligence confirmed that fact."[121] Navy officers

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[120] Vice Admiral Turner F. Caldwell, letter to author, March 14, 1988.

[121] CINCLANT Historical Account, p. 5.

that participated in the crisis are more specific. Admiral Griffin states in his oral history that some of the MRBMs were shipped on deck.[122] Vice Admiral Caldwell described this in detail:

> Photographs by patrol planes showed large cylindrical objects on the decks of several ships en route to Cuba. Though the objects were covered with tarpaulins, it was easy to see what they were. I never did decide whether the Russians wished us to know what they were doing, or the operation had been mounted so hastily there was not time to camouflage the cargoes properly, or they did not care, assuming we would find out very soon by some means anyway.[123]

Although Admiral Griffin and Vice Admiral Caldwell were convinced by the photographs, the evidence was probably viewed as ambiguous at the time. Vice Admiral William D. Houser, Naval Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Defense during the crisis, states "We may have seen missile

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[122] Admiral Charles D. Griffin, "Reminiscences of Admiral Charles D. Griffin, U.S. Navy (Retired)," Volume II (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, Oral History Program, December 1975), p. 553. General David A. Burchinal, USAF, Director of Plans on the Air Staff in 1962, states that missile transporters and erector-launchers were also spotted "coming in undercover, as deck loads on ships." See General David A. Burchinal, transcript of oral history interview, April 11, 1975 (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History), p. 113.

[123] Caldwell, letter to author, March 14, 1988. Admiral Alfred G. Ward, Commander Second Fleet during the crisis, states that two of the Soviet ships initially designated for intercept were selected "Because of the photographs showing the missile cases along the deck. A missile is too large to get into the hold below decks and had to be put in bizarre-shaped tubes along the side of the deck, and were quite easily identified." See Admiral Alfred G. Ward, "Reminiscences of Admiral Alfred G. Ward, U.S. Navy (Retired)," (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, Oral History Program, 1972), p. 196.

cannisters on deck, but not have known what they were until the missile sites were photographed."[124] Vice Admiral Houser's view is supported by the CINCLANT history of the crisis, which states that "Strategic material was photographed inboud to Cuba but was not associated with the buildup of offensive weapons until just prior to October, when intelligence confirmed that fact."[125] Thus, the evidence of Soviet offensive missiles en route to Cuba provided by shipping intelligence was probably ambiguous.

Although many senior Navy officers were convinced that the Soviets were deploying offensive missiles to Cuba, their perceptions were not widely shared outside the Navy other than by a few senior Air Force officers. One Navy flag officer related how he and his Air Force counterpart spent a total of five or six hours briefing the Chiefs during weekly JCS meetings in August and September on the evidence that the Soviets were deploying offensive missiles to Cuba. They supported their arguments with photographs of possible MRBMs or IRBMs on the decks of Soviet ships. However, they were unable to convince JCS Chairman General Maxwell D. Taylor, who did not pass their warnings on to McNamara or the

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[124] Vice Admiral William D. Houser, interview by author, February 11, 1988.

[125] CINCLANT Historical Account, p. 5. The confirmation was probably the SAM site photographs used by Colonel Wright to brief JCS and COMOR on the possibility of MRBM sites in western Cuba.

President and refused to authorize preparations to counter the shipments.[126] Others shared Taylor's skepticism. John Hughes, special assistant for photoanalysis to DIA Director Lieutenant General Joseph Carroll, testified in 1963 that Navy photographs of Soviet deck cargo did not reveal evidence of missile equipment, a conclusion shared by Hilsman.[127] Thus, although Navy shipping intelligence convinced many in the Navy (and some in the Air Force) that the Soviets were deploying offensive missiles to Cuba, outside the Navy it was not regarded as sufficiently unambiguous to warrant taking action against the Soviets. Further confirmation of the missiles would be required.

There is also reason to belive that the United States gained intelligence on the Soviet missile deployments from signals intelligence (SIGINT). Signals intelligence consists of communications intelligence (COMINT), on emissions from enemy radio and other telecommunications systems, and electronic intelligence (ELINT), on enemy radars and other non-communications emissions. The intelligence collection ship USS Oxford (AG 159) was

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[126] Letter to author. The individual requested anonymity. I verified that he held the position he described, attended JCS meetings in the August-September period, and worked with the Air Force officer he named.

[127] U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1964, Hearings, 88th Congress, 1st Session (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 8; Hilsman, p. 167.

deployed off the coast of Cuba almost continuously from early August 1962 onward.[128] In 1968 testimony, Secretary of Defense McNamara confirmed Oxford's role in the crisis: "To show you how valuable these systems are to us, let me remind you that one of these ships was off the coast of Cuba during the Cuban missile crisis. It provided invaluable information, on the basis of which national policy was formulated."[129] This would have been COMINT and ELINT collected by Oxford, the only intelligence collection ship covering Cuba at the time. Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, former Chief of Naval Operations and JCS Chairman, has stated that "electronic intelligence acquired by surface ships led to the photographic intelligence which gave us undisputible evidence of the . . . Soviet missiles in Cuba."[130] Admiral Moorer thus indicates that SIGINT collected by Oxford played an improtant role in discovery of Soviet offensive missiles in Cuba.

Very little additional information is available on the role of SIGINT in discovery of the Soviet missiles due to

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[128] USS Oxford (AG 159) Ship's History 1962, January 25, 1963 (Ships History Branch, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC).

[129] U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Armed Services, Authorization for Military Procurement, Research and Development, Fiscal Year 1969, and Reserve Strength, Hearings, 90th congress, Second Session (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968), p. 42.

[130] Quoted in Trevor Armbrister, A Matter of Accountability (New York: Cooward-McCann, 1970), p. 183.

the classification of materials on sensitive intelligence sources and methods. Thus, it cannot be determined precisely when Oxford first gained indications of Soviet offensive missiles in Cuba or exactly what it was that Oxford learned. The date of the first SIGINT indications could have been as early as the first week in August, but was probably some time between September 15 (when the first MRBMs were delivered to Sagua la Grnde) and October 1 (when JCS commenced preparations for military action against Cuba). The last week in September was the most likely period, based on the timing of U.S. surveillance and military moved directed against Cuba. SIGINT could have been used to butress Colonel Wright's conclusion--presented to the JCS on October 1 and to the COMOR on October 4--that the Soviets were deploying offensive missiles in Cuba.

Question naturally arise as to the clarity and reliability of the intelligence collected by Oxford. Since intelligence professionals generally place great confidence in SIGINT, the apparent lack of a significant U.S. reaction to intelligence on Soviet offensive missiles is puzzling. A clear indication of Soviet MRBM deployments in late September should have enabled the the United States to take decisive action three weeks earlier than it did. The blockade, at least, could have been implented within a few days of a decision to act, and further actions could have followed later (as they did in the crisis). There are two complementary explanations as to why the United States did not react vigorously to such SIGINT: First, the intelligence may have been suggestive but not conclusive. Further confirmation--U-2 photographs of clearly identifiable missile sites--was needed. Second, the source of the intelligence had to be protected by providing an alternative source for the knowledge--again meaning U-2 photographs. Under these conditions SIGINT would not have led to immediate and decisive U.S. action against the missiles.

The most important factors determining the manner in which the Kennedy Administration reacted to intelligence on Soviet offensive missiles in Cuba were President Kennedy's determination not to take action--particularly the use of force--until he had incontrovertible evidence that offensive missiles were in fact being deployed in Cuba, and his determination not to let his policy options be narrowed by political or military pressure prior to his having that evidence. President Kennedy set an extremely high standard of evidence--indisputable photographic confirmation of offensive missiles--as the requirement for taking action against Cuba or the Soviet Union. He had important reasons for doing so: ensuring American public support for his actions, convincing reluctant allies the need for action, avoiding the Soviet propaganda victory that would result from taking action unnecessarily, and, above all, not risking a military confrontation unless he was absolutely certain force was warranted.[131] The negative impact of the requirement for photographic confirmation was that it implicitly denigrated other intelligence sources and led to action not being taken until some Soviet missiles were close to being operational.[132] Had the Soviet Union taken greater care to camouflage the missile sites in Cuba while they were being readied, the requirement for photographic confirmation could well have led to President Kennedy being confronted with a fait accompli.

Further dangers of the photographic confirmation requirement were that internal distribution of intelligence on offensive weapons in Cuba could build pressure for military action and that leaks of such intelligence could build pressure in Congress and the public to take forceful action. Such internal and external pressures could narrow the President's options, force him to take action before he was convinced it was warranted, and even provoke a crisis that might have been avoided. To avoid such pressures, the President used the tactic of restricting internal dissemination of specified intelligence--a procedure that had been used for especially sensitive intelligence since early in World War II. For example, on August 31, 1962, the

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[131] Sieverts Report, p. 14; Hilsman, p. 190; Schlesinger, Robert Kennedy, p. 511; George and Smoke, pp. 473-74.

[132] Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee Interim Report, pp. 10-11; George and Smoke, pp. 473-74.

President ordered that intelligence on Soviet SAM sites in Cuba be withheld from normal dissemination in the intelligence community until he had decided upon a course of action. On October 11, the day after Republican Senator Kenneth Keating made his sensational allegations on Soviet IRBMs in Cuba, the President directed that intelligence on offensive weapons in Cuba be strictly limited "only to specific individuals on an eyes only basis who by virtue of their responsibilities as advisors to the President have a need to know."[133] This restriction on dissemination went into effect on October 12, with the code word "Psalm" assigned to intelligence on offensive weapons in Cuba.[134] The restriction functioned as intended after MRBMs were discovered in Cuba, preventing leaks for almost a week while the President decided upon a course of action.

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[133] Sieverts Report, pp. 15-17 (Emphasis in original directive).

[134] Hilsman, p. 187; Presidential Recordings Transcripts, "Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings, October 16, 1962," transcript of 11:50 A.M.-12:57 P.M. off-the-record meeting on Cuba (Presidential Papers of John F. Kennedy, President's Office Files, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, MA. Cited hereafter as "October 16 Morning Meeting Transcript."), p. 18, exerpts reproduced in "White House Tapes and Minutes of the Cuban Missile Crisis," International Security 10 (Summer 1985): 171-181. At this meeting, McNamara explained to the President how U-2 photographs were handled prior to October 12: "Normally, when a U-2 comes back, we duplicate the films. The duplicated copies go to a series of commands. A copy goes to SAC. A Copy goes to CINCLANT. A copy goes to CIA." See p. 19. A copy also went to DIA, where Colonel Wright worked on them. This appears to have contributed to different commands arriving at different conclusions on whether or not there were offensive missiles in Cuba.

As the Cuban military buildup gained momentum and tentative indicators that the Soviet were deploying offensive missiles to Cuba were received, the Kennedy Administration began studying options for dealing with offensive missiles and the Pentagon initiated a series of low-level military preparations. The first actions taken, in early August 1962, were to increase surveillance of Cuba and Soviet bloc shipping to Cuba. Beginning in late August the CIA, NSC and State Department conducted a series of studies on the Cuban military build-up and U.S. policy options for dealing with it. Some of these studies directly addressed the issue of offensive missiles, although through September 19--well after deployment of MRBMs had started--the conclusion was that the Soviets would not put such missiles in Cuba.[135] Nevertheless, these studies mark increasing attention to the situation in Cuba.

A significant step in the evolution of U.S. policy was taken on August 23, 1962, when President Kennedy approved National Security Action Memorandum No. 181 (NSAM-181).

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[135] See Central Intelligence Agency, Current Intelligence Memorandum, "Recent Soviet Military Aid to Cuba," August 22, 1962 (National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file); Special Inter-Departmental Committee, Memorandum for the President, "Report on Implications for U.S. Foreign and Defense Policy of Recent Intelligence Estimates," August 23, 1962 (Declassified 1981. National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file); Central Intelligence Agency, Special National Intelligence Estimate 85-3-62, "The Military Buildup in Cuba," September 19, 1962 (National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file).

In this document the President directed a series of actions and studies be undertaken in light of increased Soviet activity in Cuba. Three items in NSAM-181 addressed the possibility that the Soviet Union might deploy offensive missiles in Cuba:

> 5. An analysis should be prepared of the probable military, political and psychological impact of the establishment in Cuba of either surface-to-air missiles or surface-to-surface missiles which could reach the U.S.
>
> 6. A study should be made of the advantages and disadvantages of making a statement that the U.S. would not tolerate the establishment of military forces (missile or air, or both?) which might launch a nuclear attack from Cuba against the U.S.
>
> 7. A study should be made of the various military alternatives which might be adopted in executing a decision to eliminate any installations in Cuba capable of launching nuclear attack on the U.S. What would be the pros and cons, for example, of pinpoint attack, general counter-force attack, and outright invasion?[136]

These tasks were assigned to specific agencies, who were directed to report the names of the action officers working on these studies. Additionally, a meeting with the President was scheduled for September 1 to review progress on these studies.

Although not specifically tasked by NSAM-181 to contribute to these studies, Attorney General Robert F.

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[136] The White House, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, National Security Action Memorandum No. 181, August 23, 1962 (declassified 1978. John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, MA, National Security Files, Box 338, "Cuba (4). 8/23/64" folder).

Kennedy directed Norbert A. Schlei, head of the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, to prepare a study of the international legal issues that would be raised in the event that the U.S. took action against Soviet missile bases in Cuba. The central conclusion of Schlei's memorandum, submitted to the Attorney General on August 29, was that "international law would permit use by the United States of relatively extreme measures, including various forms and degrees of force, for the purpose of terminating or preventing the realization of such a threat to the peace and security of the Western Hemisphere. An obligation would exist to have recourse first, if time should permit, to the procedures of collective security organizations of which the United States is a member."[137] The Schlei memorandum also noted that either a total blockade or a "visit and search" blockade would be appropriate actions for observing the international legal principle of "proportionality."[138] Proportionality requires that use of force in self-defense be proportional to the force used against a state and be the minimum necessary to restore and ensure its security. Thus, use of a selective blockade directed only against offensive

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[137] Norbert A. Schlei, Memorandum for the Attorney General, "Legality Under International law of Remedial Action Against Use of Cuba as a Missile Base by the Soviet Union," August 29, 1962, reproduced in Abram Chayes, The Cuban Missile Crisis: International Crises and the Role of Law (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 108.

[138] Ibid, pp. 115-16.

arms shipments to Cuba was considered by at least some civilian officials as early as late August.

In September the Kennedy Administration began taking preliminary steps to respond to the Cuban military build-up. The President made public statements on the build-up on September 4 and 13, noting its apparent defensive nature and warning against installation of offensive missiles. Secretary of State Dean Rusk met with Latin American ambassadors on September 5 concerning Cuba and proposed that a closed Organization of American States (OAS) meeting be held in early October. That meeting was held October 2 and included a U.S. briefing on the Cuban military build-up. These meetings laid groundwork for the possibility that the OAS might have to take concerted action against Cuba in the future. On September 20 the Senate passed a Joint Resolution on Cuba authorizing the President to use force to defend against Cuban aggression and prevent the creation of an external military capability in Cuba that threatened the United States. The House passed this resolution on September 26 and the President signed it on October 3.[139] Thus, by early October the Kennedy Administration had taken several political and diplomatic steps to prepare for the possibility of action against Cuba.

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[139] Johns, "Naval Quarantine," pp. 77-79; Pachter, p. 18. The Joint Resolution is reproduced in David L. Larson, <u>The "Cuban Crisis" of 1962</u>, Second Edition (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), p. 33.

Military preparations were also being made. On September 7 the President requested from Congress authority to call up 150,000 reservists. On September 18 the Air Force began extensive training exercises for air strikes against Cuba, including simulated combat missions against mock Soviet SAM sites. On September 19 a detachment of Navy F8U Corsair jet fighters was transferred to Key West in order to bolster the base's air defense. On September 21 CINCLANT issued a planning directive to subordinate commands tasking them to update existing contingency plans for military action against Cuba. Throughout September the Joint Staff and CINCLANT updated Cuban contingency plans. In response to NSAM-181, the Air Force, Navy, and Joint Staff studied air strike options for dealing with offensive missiles.[140]

The regular weekly meeting of the JCS with the Secretary of Defense on October 1, 1962, marked a major turning point in U.S. military preparations related to Cuba. The first shipment of suspected IL-28 Beagle light bombers, regarded as an offensive weapon, had arrived in Cuba on September 30--the first offensive weapons confirmed

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[140] "CINCLANT Historical Account," p. 19; Hilsman, p. 171; Abel, p. 9; Office of the Secretary of Defense, Memorandum, "Department of Defense Operations During the Cuban Crisis," drafted by Adam Yarmolinsky, February 12, 1963 (declassified 1979), pp. 1, 7 (Cited hereafter as "DOD Operations"), reproduced in Dan Caldwell, ed., "Department of Defense Operations During the Cuban Crisis," Naval War College Review 32 (July/August 1979): 83-99.

to be in Cuba.[141] The delivery of IL-28s and the briefing by Colonel Wright, which warned that an offensive missile site was likely to be built in the San Cristobal area, had a significant impact on the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary of Defense. McNamara directed the Chiefs to intensify contingency planning for for military action against Cuba and to increase the readiness of U.S. forces for Cuban contingencies, including blockade, air strikes and invasion. He did not, however, order <u>execution</u> of existing air strike and invasion contingency plans.[142]

On October 2 McNamara sent a memorandum to the JCS specifying the contingencies in which military action might be taken against Cuba:

> During my meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on October 1, 1962, the question arose as to the contingencies under which military action against Cuba may be necessary and toward which our military planning should be oriented. The following categories

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[141] National Indications Center, p. 16; CNO Historical Narrative, pp. 9-10; Hilsman, p. 167. Navy patrol planes first photographed a Soviet ship carrying suspected IL-28 crates on September 16. Over the next two weeks two additional ships carrying suspected IL-28 crates were discovered. These ships were closely tracked en route to Cuba. During early October the confirmed arrival of IL-28s in Cuba seems to have been at least as great a cause for concern as the possibility of offensive missiles.

[142] "DOD Operations," pp. 1, 7. Johns contends that during this meeting McNamara ordered execution of the preparatory phases of the Cuban contingency plans. See Johns, "Naval Quarantine," p. 74. However, there is no evidence to support this and Admiral Anderson denies that McNamara gave such an order. Anderson, interview by author, January 25, 1988.

would appear to cover the likely possibilities:

a. Soviet action against Western rights in Berlin calling for a Western response indicating among other actions a blockade of Communist or other shipping to Cuba.

b. Evidence that the Castro regime has permitted the positioning of bloc offensive weapons systems on Cuban soil or in Cuban harbors.

c. An attack against the Guantanamo base, or against U.S. planes or vessels outside Cuban territorial air space or waters.

d. A substantial popular uprising in Cuba, the leaders of which request assistance in recovering Cuban independence from the Castro Soviet puppet regime.

e. Cuban armed assistance to subversion in other parts of the Western Hemisphere.

f. A decision by the President that affairs in Cuba have reached a point inconsistent with continuing U.S. national security.

May I have the views of the Chiefs as to the appropriateness of the above list of contingencies and answers to the following:

a. The operational plans considered appropriate for each contingency.

b. The preparatory actions which should now and progressively in the future be taken to improve U.S. readiness to execute these plans.

c. The consequences of the actions on the availability of forces and or our logistic posture to deal with threats in other areas, i.e. Berlin, Southeast Asia, etc.

We can assume that the political objective in any of these contingencies may be either:

a. The removal of the threat to U.S. security of Soviet weapons systems in Cuba, or

b. The removal of the Castro regime and the securing in the island of a new regime responsive to Cuban national desires.

Inasmuch as the second objective is the more difficult objective and may be required if the first is to be permanently achieved, attention should be focused on a capability to assure the second objective.[143]

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[143] Secretary of Defense, Memorandum for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, October 2, 1962 (declassified 1984),

This memorandum was important for two reasons. First, in the eyes of the Joint Chiefs--and possibly McNamara as well--three of the six contingencies had already arisen: offensive weapons, in the form of IL-28 bombers, were already in Cuba, Cuban forces had previously attacked and buzzed unarmed Navy planes over international waters (August 30 and September 8), and Cuba was suspected of supporting Communist movements in other Latin American nations. Second, McNamara emphasized planning for the worst case--forcible removal of the Castro regime. The Chiefs were thus oriented--with McNamara's full knowledge--toward preparations for large-scale air attacks and invasion of the island, rather than toward planning for a strictly limited use of force, such as a quarantine on offensive weapons.

This appears to have been the origin of at least some of the tensions between civilian and military leaders experienced during the crisis: the military was originally directed by McNamara to prepare for operations that the President was not willing to execute when the time came to decide upon a course of action. On the other hand, by making initial preparations for air strikes and invasion, the JCS increased the range of military options available to the President on short notice. The flaw in McNamara's

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reproduced in CINCLANT Historical Account, pp. 41-42; CNO Historical Narrative, Appendix II. Also see Johns, "Naval Quarantine," pp. 87-88. This is the memorandum alluded to in the Yarmolinski report. See "DOD Operations," p. 7.

October 1 memorandum was that in focusing on the overthrow of Castro it inadvertently excluded JCS attention to limited operations, such as a quarantine, that would suffice to achieve lesser objectives.

Military preparations for action against Cuba rapidly gained momentum from October 1 onward. On October 1 CINCLANT notified his Navy and Air Force commanders responsible for tactical air operations "to take all feasible measures necessary to assure maximum readiness" to execute the contingency plan for air strikes against Cuba on October 20. Navy and Tactical Air Command fighters and attack planes were placed on six, twelve, and 24 hour alerts for the air strike contingency. On October 3 Commander in Chief U.S. Atlantic Fleet (CINCLANTFLT) issued a contingency operation order (OPORD) for a Naval blockade of Cuba.[144]

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[144] CINCLANT Historical Account, pp. 39-40; "DOD Operations," p. 1; Admiral Alfred G. Ward, "Personal History of Diary of Vice Admiral Alfred G. Ward, U.S. Navy, While Serving as Commander Second Fleet," n.d. (declassified 1984), p. 2 (Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC. Cited hereafter as Ward, "Diary."). The October 20 deadline to complete preparations for air strikes against Cuba appears to have been set by McNamara at the October 1 JCS meeting and passed to CINCLANT that day. McNamara mentioned the October 20 target date in the October 16 morning and evening meetings with the President. See "October 16 Morning Meeting Transcript," p. 24; Presidential Recordings Transcripts, "Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings, October 16, 1962," transcript of 6:30-7:55 P.M. off-the-record meeting on Cuba (Presidential Papers of John F. Kennedy, President's Office Files, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, MA. Cited hereafter as "October 16 Evening Meeting Transcript."), p. 19, exerpts reproduced in "White House Tapes and Minutes of the Cuban Missile Crisis," International Security 10 (Summer 1985): 181-94.

This OPORD was for a total blockade of Cuba and included the option of mining Cuban ports. On October 4 McNamara sent a memorandum to the President in which he stated "I have taken steps to insure that our contingency plans for Cuba are kept up to date."[145] On October 6 CINCLANT directed increased readiness to execute contingency plans for invasion of Cuba. Designated Army airborne forces, Marine landing forces, and Navy amphibious forces were directed to begin prepositioning for invasion of Cuba. Prepositioning of bulk supplies, such as fuel and ammunition, also commenced. Plans were made to deploy the Fifth Marine Expeditionary Brigade from Camp Pendleton, California to the Caribbean. On October 8 a squadron of Navy F4H Phantom jet fighters was moved to Key West and placed under Continental Air Defense Command (CONAD) control to augment air defenses in southern Florida. On October 10 CINCLANT suggested further preparations to JCS and recommended that cover and deception be used to hide invasion preparations. In an unusual move, the CNO on October 12 directed that Vice Admiral Horacio Rivero immediately relieve Vice Admiral Ward as Commander Amphibious Force Atlantic Fleet so that Vice Admiral Ward could assume command of the Second Fleet by the October 20

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[145] Secretary of Defense, Memorandum for the President, "Presidential Interest in SA-2 Missile System and Contingency Planning for Cuba," October 4, 1962 (Declassified 1978. John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, MA, National Security Files, Cuba folders), p. 2. The President was thus being kept informed of the actions being taken by the military.

target date for action against Cuba. On October 16 the attack Carrier USS Independence (CVA 62) and four escorts left port and proceeded to a contingency station northeast of Cuba in order to be within air strike range of Cuba on October 20 (a mission planned and ordered well before the MRBMs were discovered on October 14).[146] Thus, when the President was informed on October 16 that offensive missiles had been discovered in Cuba, the military had already taken a number of actions to be ready for operations against Cuba.

In summary, the the last three months prior to the Cuban Missile Crisis were marked by a gradual accumulation of fragmentary and inconclusive indications that the Soviets were deploying offensive missiles in Cuba, a search for photographic confirmation of the Soviet deployment, and a series of low-level preparations for military action against Cuba. The most important factors determining the manner in which the United States reacted to intelligence on Soviet offensive missiles in Cuba were President Kennedy's determination not to take military action until he had

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[146] McNamara comments in "October 16 Morning Meeting Transcript," p. 24; Taylor and McNamara comments in "October 16 Evening Meeting Transcript," pp. 28-29; CINCLANT Historical Account, pp. 40-44; "DOD Operations," p. 1; Ward, "Diary," pp. 1-2; Abel, pp. 141-2; Anderson, interview by author, January 25, 1988; Vice Admiral Robert J. Stroh, commander of the Independence task group during the crisis, letter to author, February 18, 1988; Admiral George W. Anderson, Jr., "The Cuban Crisis," in Arnold L. Shapack, ed., Proceedings: Naval History Symposium (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Academy, 1973), p. 82.

incontrovertible evidence that offensive missiles were in Cuba, and his determination not to let his policy options be prematurely narrowed by political or military pressure. These were prudent policies, but the photographic confirmation requirement implicitly denigrated other intelligence and led to action not being taken until some Soviet missiles were close to being operational. By initially focusing JCS attention on major operations to overthrow the Castro regime, McNamara inadvertently diverted attention from limited operations designed to achieve lesser objectives--operations that would later be selected by the President.

Political-Strategic Context

The Soviet Union had two primary objectives in deploying offensive missiles in Cuba: defending their Cuban clients and improving their position in the strategic nuclear balance with the United States.[147] Khrushchev

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[147] For the assessments of Soviet motives that were made during the crisis, see Central Intelligence Agency, Special National Intelligence Estimate 11-18-62, "Soviet Reactions to Certain US Courses of Action on Cuba," October 19, 1962 (declassified 1975), pp. 1-3 (National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuba file, Record No. 199. Cited hereafter as "SNIE 11-19-62"); Central Intelligence Agency, Special National Intelligence Estimate 11-19-62, "Major Consequences of Certain US Courses of Action on Cuba," October 20, 1962 (declassified 1975), pp. 3-5 (National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuba file, Record No. 20. Cited hereafter as "SNIE 11-19-62"). Disagreements exist over which of these motives was most important to the Soviets, but are irrelevant to this study. See Robert D. Crane, "The Cuban Crisis: A Strategic Analysis of American and Soviet Policy," Orbis 6 (Winter 1963): 528-36; Arnold L.

states in his memoirs that defending Cuba was his primary objective, not only for the sake of the Castro regime but also to protect Soviet influence and prestige in Latin America and among the Communist nations.[148] However, the strategic balance was also very much on Khrushchev's mind. As he states in his memoirs, "In addition to protecting Cuba, our missiles would have equalized what the West likes to call 'the balance of power'."[149]

The missiles had an even greater impact on the political and psychological aspects of the strategic balance, enhancing the image of Soviet power. Khrushchev states in his memoirs that U.S. nuclear forces in Europe

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Horelick, "The Cuban Missile Crisis: An Analysis of Soviet Calculations and Behavior," World Politics 16 (April 1964): 364-377; Albert and Roberta Wohlstetter, "Controlling the Risks in Cuba," Adelphi Papers No. 17 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, April 1965), pp. 8-12; Herbert S. Dinerstein, The Making of a Missile Crisis: October 1962 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 156; George and Smoke, pp. 459-66; Hilsman, pp. 161-65; Ulam, pp. 668-77; Sorenson, pp. 676-78. Some American officials thought the Soviet venture in Cuba was related to Berlin. See Abel, pp. 47-48; Wohlstetters, pp. 14-15; Tatu, p. 232-34; Pachter, p. 24. Although this idea may have occurred to some Soviet officials, there is no evidence that it was a major consideration.

[148] Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, pp. 492-3. Khrushchev's mention of Soviet standing among Communist nations appears to be a veiled allusion to Soviet relations with Communist China, which were strained in 1962 due to, among other things, Chinese accusations that the Soviets were overly accommodating with the imperialist camp. Also see Nikita S. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament, translated and edited by Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), pp.509-11.

[149] Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, p. 494.

influenced his decision to put offensive missiles in Cuba: "The United States had already surrounded the Soviet Union with its own bomber bases and missiles. We knew that American missiles were aimed against us in Turkey and Italy, to say nothing of West Germany."[150] Thus, it is likely that Khrushcehv also desired to balance--politically if not militarily--U.S. "forward based systems" with Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba.[151]

The Soviet strategy at the time the decision was made to deploy offensive missiles in Cuba was to achieve a fait accompli.[152] Khrushchev states that his plan was to install "missiles with nuclear warheads in Cuba without letting the United States find out they were there until it was too late to do anything about them." He goes on to say "My thinking went like this: if we installed the missiles secretly and then the United States discovered the missiles were there

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[150] Ibid., p. 493.

[151] See Secretary of State Rusk's comments in "October 16 Morning Meeting Transcript," p. 15. The Soviets took the same approach in reaction to the December 1979 NATO decision to deploy American Pershing II MRBMs and Ground Launched Cruise Missiles in Western Europe commencing in 1983. On March 16, 1982, Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev warned that deployment of the U.S. weapons "would compel us to take retaliatory steps that would put the other side, including the United States itself, its own territory, in an analogous position." See "Soviet Announces Freeze on Missiles in European Area," New York Times, March 17, 1982, p. 1.

[152] See Horelick, p. 385; Sorenson, p. 678; Young, p. 235; Edward Weintal and Charles Bartlett, Facing the Brink: An Intimate Study of Crisis Diplomacy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), p. 55.

after they were already poised and ready to strike, the Americans would think twice before trying to liquidate our installations by military means."[153] The Soviet diplomatic cover and deception effort mounted during deployment of the missiles and the efforts that were made to conceal the deployment lend credence to the conclusion that the Soviets sought to achieve a fait accompli.[154]

United States discovery of the Soviet missiles before they were operational effectively defeated the fait accompli

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[153] Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, p. 493.

[154] Some observers have speculated that the slipshod Soviet effort to conceal deployment of the the missiles may have indicated that the Soviets did not care whether or not the Umited States discovered the missiles, or even that they intended for the U.S. to discover the missiles. See Caldwell, letter to author, March 14, 1988; Pachter, p. 10; Quester, p. 235. This view is contradicted by the efforts the Soviets made to conceal delivery of the missiles, such as convoying the missiles only at night, and by Soviet diplomatic deception efforts. Three other factors appear to offer a better explanation. First, the Soviet deployment plan emphasized speed rather than stealth--objectives that are often mutually exclusive. See Pachter, p. 9. This appears to have been a deliberate decision, perhaps driven by a deadline for making the missiles operational. Second, the operation was mounted in a rush, with minimum advance planning. Concealment measures were included in the plan, but appear not to have covered all requirements necessary to be effective. This would explain the easily identified trapezoidal pattern of SAM sites at San Cristobal. The SAMs were deployed to provide the standard interlocking field of fire around the target to be defended, without an effort to avoid a previously used pattern. Third, the Soviets did not have a sufficient number of large hatch ships to carry all of the missiles to Cuba below decks in the desired time frame. Some of the missiles and their bulky support equipment had to be shipped on deck to expedite delivery. Griffin, "Reminiscences," p. 553. Inadequate concealment thus appears to have been caused by hasty planning and deliberate emphasis on speed rather than stealth.

strategy. The Soviet Union appears not to have been able to formulate an overall political-military strategy from October 22 onward. The Soviets were placed in a position of reacting to American initiatives, which effectively precluded them from pursuing a strategy of their own. The initial Soviet response was belligerent denouncement of the quarantine accompanied by an effort to expedite completion of the missile sites. However, the Soviets did not place their nuclear or conventional forces at a high state of alert in an effort to coerce the United States and ordered their ships carrying weapons to Cuba to turn back rather than contest the quarantine. These actions have widely, and probably correctly, been interpreted as Soviet recognition of U.S. strategic nuclear superiority and conventional superiority in the Caribbean.[155]

Once American resolve became apparent during the October 22-26 period, Khrushchev commenced diplomatic bargaining to resolve the crisis on the best terms possible. His primary objectives appear to have been to avoid war with the Unites States and to avert an American

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[155] Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, p. 496; Tatu, pp. 261-65; Garthoff, Reflections, pp. 36-42; Crane, pp. 546-47; Wohlstetters, pp. 16-17; Horelick, pp. 370-71, 387; Hilsman, 226-27; Alexander L. George, "The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962," in Alexander L. George, David K. Hall, and William E. Simons, The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy (Little, Brown, 1971), p. 133; Marc Trachtenberg, "The Influence of Nuclear Weapons in the Cuban Missile Crisis," International Security 10 (Summer 1985): 137-63.

invasion of Cuba, which he apparently perceived to be imminent. A U.S. invasion of Cuba would have threatened one of his primary objectives for sending the missiles to Cuba in the first place. Additionally, Khrushchev sought to achieve certain concessions in exchange for removing the missiles: a pledge that the United States would not invade Cuba and an formal commitment that the United States would withdraw its Jupiter missiles from Turkey.[156] President Kennedy agreed to the no-invasion pledge, but offered only private, informal assurances that U.S. Jupiter missiles would be removed from Turkey, which Khrushchev accepted. However, these American concessions harcly compensated for the political-military setback suffered by the Soviet Union.

President Kennedy had two principle objectives in the Cuban Missile Crisis: elimination of Soviet offensive weapons from Cuba and avoidance of nuclear war with the Soviet Union. In his first meeting with advisors on the discovery of MRBMs, held the morning of October 16, the President made clear his view that the missiles had to be eliminated, by force if necessary. Both objectives were expressed in the President's televised speech on October 22 announcing the Cuban quarantine. The objective of removing the missiles from Cuba was also clearly stated in the

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[156] Khrushchev, <u>Khrushchev Remembers</u>, p. 495-500; Khrushchev, <u>Last Testament</u>, p. 512; George, "Cuban Missile Crisis," pp. 118-29; Tatu, pp. 265-73; Crane, pp. 546-48; Garthoff, <u>Reflections</u>, pp. 57-58.

October 23 quarantine proclamation and the President's October 27 letter to Khrushchev.[157]

The Kennedy Administration limited the political objectives it sought to achieve in order to facilitate peaceful resolution of the crisis. Other objectives, such as removal of all Soviet forces from Cuba or overthrow of the Castro regime, were weighed by the President and his advisors, but quickly rejected in order to limit the scope of the crisis and avoid provoking escalation by the Soviets.[158] On the other hand, the option of doing nothing about the missiles--living with the new threat rather than trying to eliminate it--was also considered, but quickly

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[157] "October 16 Morning Meeting Transcript," p. 27; Robert S. McNamara, "Background Briefing on the Cuban Situation," transcript, October 22, 1962, p. 2; Robert Kennedy, p. 33; Hilsman, p. 202; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, pp. 801-2; Sorenson, p. 683; Pachter, p. 13. For the texts of the President's October 22 speech and October 23 quarantine proclamation, see "The Soviet Threat to the Americas," Department of State Bulletin 47 (November 12, 1962): 715-20. For the text of the President's October 27 letter, see "U.S. and Soviet Union Agree on Formula for Ending Cuban Crisis," Department of State Bulletin 47 (November 12, 1962): 743.

[158] Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 804; Hilsman, p. 202, 228; Sorenson, pp. 680-83; George, "Cuban Missile Crisis," p. 94. Later in the crisis, when advisors would express support for additional objectives, such as removing Castro from power, the President remained firm that the U.S. objective was removing the Soviet missiles from Cuba. For example, see the exchange between CIA Director McCone, Secretary of State Rusk, and the President in Bromley Smith, "Summary Record of NSC Executive Committee Meeting No. 6, October 26, 1962, 10:00 AM," p. 5 (declassified 1978. National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file. Cited hereafter as "October 26 EXCOMM Meeting Summary Record.").

rejected. Although McNamara believed that the missiles had little impact on the strategic nuclear balance, other advisors perceived a serious military threat from the missiles. Additionally, there was a consensus that the missiles would have a political and psychological impact that posed a grave threat to U.S. interests.[159] American leaders thus perceived that vital national interests were at stake and that those interests had to be protected, but they also perceived that U.S. objectives in the crisis had to be limited in order to avoid war with the Soviet Union.

President Kennedy's second major objective was to limit the use of force in order to avoid war with the Soviet Union.[160] Some of the President's advisors--Dean Acheson, John McCone, Paul Nitze, and Douglas Dillon--as well as many

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[159] For McNamara's views, see his comments in "October 16 Evening Meeting Transcript," p. 12. Also see Abel, pp. 51, 60; Hilsman, p. 195; Sorenson, p. 683; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 803. For the opposing view, see SNIE 11-18-62, pp. 2-3, Annex B; SNIE 11-19-62, pp. 3-5; comments made by the President, Robert Kennedy, General Taylor, and Douglas Dillon in "October 16 Evening Meeting Transcript," pp. 12-15. Also see Sorenson, p. 678; Hilsman, p. 201; Abel, pp. 50-52; Wohlstetters, pp. 12-14; George, "Cuban Missile Crisis," pp. 89-94; Raymond L. Garthoff, Intelligence Assessment and Policymaking: A Decision Point in the Kennedy Administration (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1984), pp. 27-53.

[160] This is readily apparent in the President's remarks during the October 27 meeting of the Executive Committee. See "October 27, 1962: Transcripts of the Meetings of the ExComm," transcribed by McGeorge Bundy and edited by James G. Blight, International Security 12 (Winter 1987/88): 50-58, 83, 87-91 (Cited hereafter as "October 27 Meetings Transcript.").

military men, including General Taylor, felt that American conventional superiority in the Caribbean and overall strategic nuclear superiority meant that there was little likelihood the Soviets would launch a war. On the other hand, the President, Secretary McNamara, McGeorge Bundy, and others were deeply concerned that an armed clash with the Soviet Union could escalate to war. Their concerns were over the unpredictability of Soviet reactions and the danger of a military clash getting out of control.[161] Additionally, the Soviet Union on September 11 had accused the U.S. of "preparing for aggression against Cuba" and warned that "if the aggressors unleash war our armed forces must be ready to strike a crushing retaliatory blow at the aggressor."[162]

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[161] On the view that American military superiority made war unlikely, see Burchinal, oral history, p. 116; Vice Admiral Turner F. Caldwell, letter to author, March 14, 1988; Rear Admiral Paul E. Hartmann, Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations at CINCLANT during the crisis, letter to author, February 22, 1988; James G. Blight, Joseph S. Nye, Jr., and David A. Welch, "The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited," Foreign Affairs 66 (Fall 1987): 174-75; Eliot A. Cohen, "Why We Should Stop Studying the Cuban Missile Crisis," The National Interest No. 2 (Winter 1985/6): 5. On the President's and McNamara's escalation concerns, see "October 16 Evening Meeting Transcript," pp. 10, 22-23; "October 27 Meetings Transcript," pp. 52, 58, 74-75. Also see Robert Kennedy, pp. 98-99; Sorenson, pp. 680-81; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 804; Hilsman, p. 204; Williams, pp. 116-17; Weintal and Bartlett, p. 67; Blight, et al., "Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited," pp. 173, 176.

[162] "Soviet Says A U.S. Attack on Cuba Would Mean War," New York Times, September 12, 1962, p. 1. The President's advisors were aware of this warning and apparently considered it in formulating a course of action. See Sorenson, p. 680; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 799; Hilsman, p. 165-6.

Thus, although military options entailing greater force than the quarantine, such as air strikes and invasion, were seriously considered, they were deferred in order to avoid an armed confrontation with the Soviets for as long as possible.[163]

The Kennedy Administration intuitively employed the "coercive diplomacy" strategy in the Cuban Missile Crisis.[164] The strategy evolved in an ad hoc manner, rather than having been articulated at the outset. Alexander George has described the President as following a "try and see" approach, in which improvisation was the key feature, from October 22 to October 26.[165] The diplomatic communications and limited military actions initiated during this period were based on certain principles in the minds of U.S. policymakers, which will be described below, an informal crisis management strategy.

President Kennedy's intuitive strategy for managing the crisis was based on four considerations, which would

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[163] See "October 16 Morning Meeting Transcript," pp. 8-13; "October 16 Evening Meeting Transcript," pp. 6-10, 22-25; "October 27 Meetings Transcript," pp. 65-66, 88-90. Also see Sorenson, pp. 682-83; Hilsman, pp. 202-4; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, pp. 803-4; Abel, pp. 60-63; George, "Cuban Missile Crisis," p. 95.

[164] George, "Cuban Missile Crisis," pp. 88-89. Also see Alexander L. George, "The Development of Doctrine and Strategy," in Alexander L. George, David K. Hall, and William E. Simons, The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy (Little, Brown, 1971), pp. 18-19.

[165] George, "Cuban Missile Crisis," pp. 95-96, 104.

later be described as principles of crisis management. The first consideration was that the U.S. had to seize the initiative by keeping U.S. knowledge of the Soviet missiles secret until ready to announce a course of action. The effort apparently succeeded: by all accounts Khrushchev was taken by surprise when President Kennedy suddenly announced the quarantine. This precluded Soviet diplomatic efforts to forestall an American attempt to force removal of the missiles and enabled the United States, rather than the Soviet Union, to define the political context and significance of the crisis. President Kennedy thus was able to portray the Soviet missile deployment as an unprecedented threat to the Western Hemisphere and to draw a sharp distinction between Soviet missiles in Cuba and U.S. missiles in Turkey.[166]

What was missing was a plan, or even a concept, of action for exploiting the initiative after it had been seized. After initial success--unanimous OAS support for the quarantine and a tentative Soviet decision not to challenge it--the United States started losing momentum. The Kennedy Administration knew that the passage of time would make it more difficult to get the missiles out of

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[166] "October 16 Morning Meeting Transcript," pp. 16-19, 28-29; "October 16 Evening Meeting Transcript," pp. 10-11, 16-17; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 810; Hilsman, pp. 198-200, 207; Sorenson, p. 676. Also see Pachter, p. 15; George, "Cuban Missile Crisis," p. 99.

Cuba, but initially did not have a plan for maintaining initiative by increasing pressure on the Soviets.[167]

The second consideration on which the President's approach was based was that of preserving military and diplomatic options, dividing military options into discrete increments, and applying military force in a graduated response. By starting with the quarantine--the least violent and provocative of his military options--the President avoided taking action that might have irreversibly committed the United States to an armed confrontation with the Soviet Union. Similarly, by deliberately not issuing an ultimatum on October 22, the President avoided an irreversible political commitment to an armed confrontation.[168]

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[167] George, "Cuban Missile Crisis," pp. 95-98, 100-1, 115; Sorenson, pp. 687-88; Pachter, p. 47; Garthoff, Reflections, p. 44; David A. Welch and James G. Blight, "The Eleventh Hour of the Cuban Missile Crisis: An Introduction to the ExComm Transcripts," International Security 12 (Winter 1987/88): 26.

[168] See comments by Rusk in "October 16 Morning Meeting Transcript," pp. 8-10; comments by the President and McNamara in "October 16 Evening Meeting Transcript," pp. 17, 23, 49-50; comment by McNamara on "applying force gradually" in Bromley Smith, "Summary Record of NSC Executive Committee Meeting No. 5, October 25, 1962, 5:00 PM," pp. 2-3 (declassified 1978. National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file. Cited hereafter as "October 25 Evening EXCOMM Meeting Summary Record."); "October 26 EXCOMM Meeting Summary Record," p. 2; comments by the President in "October 27 Meetings Transcript," p. 88; Robert Kennedy, p. 83; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 806; Hilsman, pp. 213-16, 228; Sorenson, pp. 694, 708, 711. Also see George, "Cuban Missile Crisis," pp. 104-5, 116-17; Abel, pp. 81, 173; Wohlstetters, pp. 19-20; Young, pp. 236-40; Williams, pp. 119-20; Ole R. Holsti, Crisis Escalation War (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1972), p. 185.

Military operations were extensively subdivided in Executive Committee (EXCOMM) deliberations during the crisis. The blockade option was subdivided into the initial quarantine on offensive arms, an expanded quarantine that would include POL (petroleum, oil, and lubricants) and perhaps other strategic commodities, and a total blockade of shipping in and out of Cuba. The President had additional naval options: a plan for destruction of Soviet submarines should they threaten an expanded blockade, and a plan for mining Cuban harbors as a form of blockade. The air strike option was conceptually subdivided into small-scale, "tit-for-tat" attacks on SAM sites or anti-aircraft guns that fired on U.S. planes, large-scale air strikes against the Cuban air defense system, and full-scale strikes against the Soviet offensive missile sites and Cuban defenses. The next level of military response was invasion of Cuba.[169] The President could execute these options incrementally in order to progessively increase coercion in support of diplomatic bargaining.

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[169] See comments by the President, Robert Kennedy, McNamara, and Bundy in "October 16 Morning Meeting Transcript," pp. 17-18, 20-21, 25-27; comments by the President, McNamara, Bundy, and General Taylor in "October 16 Evening Meeting Transcript," pp. 7-9, 17-18, 21, 49-50; comments by McNamara in Bromley Smith, "Executive Committee Minutes, October 23, 1962, 10:00 AM," p. 2 (declassified 1978. National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file. Cited hereafter as "October 23 EXCOMM Minutes."); "October 25 Evening EXCOMM Meeting Summary Record," p. 3; "October 27 Meetings Transcript," pp. 52, 56, 58, 64-65, 68-69, 88.

The problem with the graduated response approach was that although President Kennedy had carefully preserved his military and diplomatic options, he did not devise a scheme for employing those options in an integrated strategy of coercive bargaining. This is shown by the uncertainty over what the President's next step would have been had Khrushchev not agreed on October 28 to dismantle the missiles in Cuba. Practical operational problems with employing some of the military options (such as the small-scale air strike option, which was hard to keep small), as well as uncertainty over the Soviet response to any of the options, were probably the major reasons for the lack of even a tentative plan for using the options. However, at least part of the problem was that the EXCOMM was distracted by operational details. Records of EXCOMM deliberations reveal military options being dissected in incredible detail, while attempts to formulate future courses of action rarely went beyond the next immediate step that would be taken.[170]

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[170] See comments by the President, and McNamara in "October 16 Evening Meeting Transcript," pp. 22-23; Bromley Smith, "Summary Record of NSC Executive Committee Meeting No. 4, October 25, 1962, 10:00 AM," p. 1 (declassified 1980. National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file. Cited hereafter as "October 25 Morning EXCOMM Meeting Summary Record."); "October 25 Evening EXCOMM Meeting Summary Record," pp. 1-6; "October 26 EXCOMM Meeting Summary Record," pp. 1-7; comments by the President, McNamara and Taylor in "October 27 Meetings Transcript," pp. 52, 64, 68; Robert Kennedy, p. 96.

The third consideration was maintaining control of events, paying close attention to the details of military operations, and pacing events to allow time for communication and decisionmaking. The EXCOMM discussed military operations in great detail and certain military operations, such as the intercept and boarding of Soviet ships and low-level photographic reconnaissance flights, were closely controlled. On October 23 the President gave some sort of order for the quarantine force to delay its initial boardings of Soviet ships specifically for the purpose of giving Khrushchev more time to react to the quarantine. Later, on October 27, the President directed that air strikes on Soviet SAMs and Cuban air defenses, which had already shot down a U-2 and fired on low-level flights, be postponed until the Soviets had a chance to react to his latest diplomatic proposals.[171] As will be discussed later, EXCOMM attention to military operations was uneven and focused on a few specific areas.

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[171] See the discussion on whether or not to intercept an East German passenger ship in "October 25 Evening EXCOMM Meeting Summary Record," pp. 4-6; and the decision to delay night reconnaissance flights and blockade of POL in "October 26 EXCOMM Meeting Summary Record," p. 2. On the decision to delay retaliatory strikes on Cuban air defenses, see "October 27 Meetings Transcript," pp. 66, 74, 78, 88-90. On EXCOMM attention to the details of military operations, see Robert Kennedy, pp. 37, 76; Hilsman, 198, 213, 215, 221; Sorenson, pp. 708-9, 713; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, pp. 818, 822, 827-28. Also see George, "Cuban Missile Crisis," pp. 109, 115; Abel, p. 32; Wohlstetters, p. 15; Young, p. 238; Williams, p. 116.

President Kennedy was probably the ultimate source of the emphasis on maintaining close control of military operations. The President had read Barbara W. Tuchman's The Guns of August and was heavily influenced by her descriptionof Europe's leaders losing control of events as the crisis in the summer of 1914 spiraled to war. According to Rear Admiral Tazewell T. Shepard, Jr., Naval Aide to President Kennedy, prior to the crisis the President had suggested to the Joint Chiefs that they should read The Guns of August because he wanted them to "think, not just plow ahead."[172] The President's bitter experience in the Bay of Pigs fiasco reinforced his determination to carefully consider and closely control military moves, rather than risk being dragged along by events beyond his control.[173]

What was missing was detailed consideration of how to effectively control military operations. No thought was given to the practical operational problems that would arise from attempting to control large-scale military operations directly from the White House. McNamara and his assistants did not understand the military command system and had little respect for it. The optimism (military men called it

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[172] Rear Admiral Tazewell T. Shepard, Jr., interview by author, February 10, 1988. Also see Robert Kennedy, pp. 62, 127; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 832; Abel, pp. 207-8.

[173] Anderson, "As I Recall," p. 44; Hilsman, pp. 33-34, 575; Sorenson, p. 708; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, pp. 295-97, 426, 818; Abel, p. 40; Jack Raymond, Power at the Pentagon (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 284.

arrogance) and energy that marked the Kennedy Administration's style greatly influenced the approach it took to military operations. McNamara and his assistants appeared to believe that they could run a better military operation the same way they could write a better defense budget. However, their approach to military command and control was intuitive and impulsive, rather than reasoned and planned. They had not worked with the military prior to the crisis to develop and refine methods and procedures for direct control that both sides would understand, with the result that the military was caught off-guard by their sudden intrusion into operational matters. McNamara and his assistants apparently did not stop to consider that matters as minor as not knowing military jargon or how to talk properly on radio nets could seriously impede communications and even defeat their well-intentioned efforts to control military operations.[174]

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[174] The most striking indication of the lack of preparation for exercising direct control was the havoc it created in the military communications system. Admiral Robert L. Dennison, Commander in Chief Atlantic during the crisis, states in his oral history that when the White House tried to get on the radio it would "gum up" his command circuits: "It happens all the time, I guess. But I had to tell all these Washington stations to get off my circuits and stay off because they were interfering with operations." Admiral Robert L. Dennison, "The Reminiscences of Admiral Robert Lee Dennison, U.S. Navy (Retired)," (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, Oral History Program, August 1975), p. 421. The lack of attention to the organizational, procedural, and operational requirements for effectively exercising direct control is discussed in detail in the following section on command and control.

The fourth consideration was Soviet leaders must not be confronted with a choice between war and surrender, and that they must be left a way out of the crisis other than in total humiliation. This consideration derived from the objective of avoiding war with the Soviet Union, discussed above. The implication of this consideration was that, if the Soviet Union could not be compelled to remove the missiles by coercive pressure alone, the United States would have to offer concessions in diplomatic bargaining. President Kennedy and some of his advisors recognized from the start that concessions might have to be made. The President seems to have been willing, as a last resort, to offer to remove U.S. Jupiter missiles in Turkey in exchange for removal of Soviet missiles from Cuba in order to avoid taking military action against Cuba. However, the President did not formulate a negotiating strategy other than his insistence that no concession would be offered until after American resolve had been impressed upon the Soviets. Nor was an effort made to identify a list of possible concessions. The obvious offers, a Turkey-Cuba deal or withdrawal of U.S. forces from Guantanamo, were quickly rejected. The key concession that produced the settlement--an American pledge not to invade Cuba--was proposed by Khrushchev in his October 26 letter. The President also sought initially to avoid the appearance of delivering an ultimatum to the Soviets and specifically avoided setting a deadline for removal of the missiles. However, when it became apparent on October 27 that the vague threat of further action at some future date was not having a sufficiently coercive effect, the President delivered an ultimatum to the Soviets via his brother Bobby--threatening that military action would be taken against Cuba unless a commitment to remove the missiles was received the next day.[175] Thus, although the Kennedy Administration was aware of the consideration that the Soviets must be left with a way out of the crisis other than war or humiliation, it did not formulate an overall negotiating strategy for resolving the crisis.

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[175] The option of delivering an ultimatum to the Soviets was mentioned by the President (who contemplated delivering an ultimatum when he met with Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko on October 18) and discussed by his advisors in their second meeting of the crisis. See "October 16 Evening Meeting Transcript," pp. 17, 31, 46-47. On the October 27 ultimatum, see Robert Kennedy, pp. 108-9; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 829; Sorenson, p. 715; Abel, p. 199; George, "Cuban Missile Crisis," p. 125. On not humiliating the Soviets, see Sorenson, p. 694, 717; George, "Cuban Missile Crisis," pp. 88-89; Weintal and Bartlett, p. 68. On leaving the Soviets a way out of the crisis, see Sorenson, p. 682, 691; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 821; George, "Cuban Missile Crisis," pp. 88-89; Pachter, p. 54; Young, p. 238; Williams, p. 120; Holsti, p.186. On not bargaining until after resolve had been demonstrated, see George, "Cuban Missile Crisis," pp. 98-100; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 810. On the lack of a negotiating strategy, see George, "Cuban Missile Crisis," pp. 100-103, 117-18; Sorenson, p. 695. On the Cuba-Turkey deal, see "October 27 Meetings Transcript," pp. 35-61, 75-77, 81-83; Abel, pp. 195-95; Welch and Blight, pp. 12-18; George, "Cuban Missile Crisis," p. 101. Adlai Stevenson had proposed offering Guantanamo as a bargaining chip, which the President quickly rejected. See Robert Kennedy, p. 49; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 810; Abel, p. 95.

Command and Control

The Cuban Missile Crisis marked the first major employment of U.S. forces under the command structure established by the 1958 defense reorganization. However, the command procedures actually used did not adhere to the chain of command established by that reorganization. Under the 1958 reorganization the chain of command ran from the President, to the Secretary of Defense, and then to the appropriate unified or specified commander. The JCS was to function as an advisory body to the President and as an executive agent for the Secretary of Defense, rather than as a separate level in the chain of command. The National Military Command Center (NMCC) should have been the Secretary of Defense's operational control center.

In actuality, the chain of command was structured essentially as it had been prior to the 1958 reorganization. McNamara passed orders to General Taylor, rather than to the Commander in Chief Atlantic (CINCLANT).[176] This was probably unavoidable given to the immense scale of military operations conducted during the crisis, which involved several commands in addition to CINCLANT.

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[176] General Maxwell D. Taylor, Transcript of Recorded Interview by Elspeth Rostow (Boston, MA: John F. Kennedy Library, Oral History Program, 1964), p. 8; Vice Admiral John L. Chew, Deputy Director for Operations (J-3), Joint Staff during the crisis, "The Reminiscences of Vice Admiral John L. Chew, U.S. Navy (Retired)," (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, Oral History Program, February 1979), pp. 316-17; Anderson, interview by author, January 25, 1988.

Reverting to pre-1958 procedures, the JCS on October 19 designated the CNO, Admiral Anderson, as its executive agent for CINCLANT's Cuban operations.[177] This had three primary implications. First, it placed the CNO in the chain of command between the Secretary of Defense and CINCLANT. General Taylor passed orders he received from McNamara to Admiral Anderson, who who in turn issued orders to CINCLANT. It is important to note that Admiral Anderson was not just a conduit for orders from the President, he was deeply involved in planning and execution of the operations.[178] Second, it shifted responsibility for planning and preparing orders from the Joint Staff to the the CNO's staff, known as OPNAV (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations). The Joint Staff was largely on the sidelines during the crisis.[179] Third, it caused Flag Plot, which was

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[177] Admiral U.S.G. Sharp, Deputy CNO for Plans and Policy during the crisis, letter to author, February 24, 1988; Captain John H. Carmichael, Assistant Director, Fleet Operations Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV), and Director of Flag Plot during the crisis, letter to author, March 8, 1988; Houser, interview by author, February 11, 1988; Shepard, interview by author, February 10, 1988; Griffin, "Reminiscences," p. 552.

[178] Anderson, interview by author, January 25, 1988; Griffin, "Reminiscences," p. 552. Admiral Dennison, CINCLANT during the crisis, states that "I never got a call from the White House during the entire operation." Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 421.

[179] Shepard, interview by author, February 10, 1988; Houser, interview by author, February 11, 1988. Vice Admiral Chew states that McNamara "paid very little attention" to the Joint Staff during the crisis. Chew, "Reminiscences," p. 331.

(and still is) the CNO's operations control (OPCON) center, rather than NMCC, to be the OPCON center for all CINCLANT naval and military operations during the crisis.[180] Admiral Anderson insisted on this at the time, remarking to then-Captain Houser that "this is a Navy show, we're going to show them how it's done."[181] However, after the crisis he admitted in retrospect that it would have been better to run the extensive joint operations from NMCC rather than from Flag Plot.[182] Thus, the manner in which the military chain of command actually functioned during the crisis was much

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[180] Flag Plot thus was the OPCON center for all Army and Air Force preparations for invasion and air strikes against Cuba, as well as Navy quarantine operations and preparations for air strikes and invasion. This is because all Army and Air Force units assigned to operations against Cuba were placed under the command of CINCLANT, who reported to the CNO (as executive agent for the JCS). There were only three areas for which Flag Plot was not the OPCON center: aerial surveillance of Cuba (high-altitude, low-altitude, and peripheral), which was controlled directly by JCS through the Joint Reconnaissance Center; air defense of the United States, controlled by the Continental Air Defense Command (working closly with CINCLANT); and Strategic Air Command alert operations, also controlled directly by JCS.

[181] Houser, interview by author, February 11, 1988.

[182] Admiral Anderson makes a revealing remark in his oral history: "It was also apparent to me, and this is a lesson that I had from the operation, that to control the naval operation through Flag Plot up in the Navy Department Section was not a satisfactory way of handling it. It would have been better to have those things handled by the JCS command post in the JCS area, rather than decentralization like my doing the quarantining from up above [in Flag Plot]." Admiral George W. Anderson, Jr., "The Reminiscences of Admiral George W. Anderson, Jr., U.S. Navy (Retired)," Volume II (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, Oral History Program, 1983), p. 551.

different than had been envisioned when the 1958 reorganization was enacted.

The significance of all this is that these pre-1958 command arrangements were designed to support a command philosophy emphasizing substantial delegation of control, rather than highly centralized control. The JCS executive agent system presupposed that commanders in the field or at sea had substantial autonomy and need only be given an objective and overall guidelines for their operations. It was not a system for facilitating close control of operations by the White House. There is no evidence that McNamara attempted to modify JCS command procedures prior to the crisis. This stands in stark contrast to the revolutionary changes he made in the Defense Department's administrative organization and management procedures--changes that emphasized centralization of decisionmaking authority. During the crisis, McNamara's interventions in the command system were impulsive and lacked planning or prior coordination with the military, producing hurried, ad hoc changes in support of the President's desire to maintain control of events. In effect, the President and McNamara were attempting to exercise centralized control through a command system designed for decentralized control.

The White House Situation Room and the CNO's Flag Plot played a prominent role in the Cuban Missile Crisis. The White House Situation Room was established in 1961 at the suggestion of Captain Shepard, the President's Naval Aide, in order to provide the President with better communications and related facilities for managing crises. The Situation Room contained regular and secure telephones ("scrambled" to prevent interception), teletype and voice radio equipment, and a collection of maps and charts.[183] During the crisis the location and status of U.S. forces and all available intelligence on Soviet and Cuban forces was assembled there for twice-daily Presidential briefings. The President had complete and timely information on all Navy units participating in the quarantine and all related operations in the Atlantic and Caribbean. Soviet bloc merchant ships en route to Cuba and Soviet submarines discovered by the Navy were tracked in the Situation Room.[184] Because it was established in a rush on limited funds, the Situation Room did not have the extensive command and control capabilities of NMCC or Flag Plot, but it was far superior to the facilities any previous President had in the White House.

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[183] Tazewell T. Shepard, Jr., John F. Kennedy: Man of the Sea (New York: William Morrow, 1965), p. 96; Commander Gerry M. McCabe, Assistant Naval Aide to the President and Director of the White House Situation Room during the crisis, interview by author, February 22, 1988. Responsibility for the Situation Room was later transferred to the National Security Council Staff.

[184] Shepard, John F. Kennedy, pp. 104-4; Shepard, interview by author, February 10, 1988; McCabe, interview by author, February 22, 1988; Anderson, interview by author, January 25, 1988; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 818; Sorenson, pp. 709-10.

Flag Plot, on the fourth floor of the "D" ring in Navy section of the Pentagon, had been established by Admiral Arleigh Burke during his tenure as CNO. It contained extensive communications equipment, large wall charts of the world's oceans, and separate conference and briefing rooms. When the CNO was designated the JCS executive agent on October 19, the Flag Plot staff was placed on alert and augmented with specialists from other sections of OPNAV. All of Flag Plot was declared a Top Secret area and additional Marine guards were posted. Captain Carmichael, Director of Flag Plot during the crisis, has described the information available there:

> Since the CNO was running the show, Flag Plot kept track of all forces--Army, Navy and Air Force--assigned to the operation. . . . Flag Plot maintained a ship locator for all U.S. Navy ships or any special interest ship. Pertinent ones were plotted on the world charts mounted on the walls. Records were kept of all ship movements and other information necessary for keeping the Navy picture world-wide. . . . As complete a picture of forces location as possible was kept and displayed so that Admiral Anderson could exercise command.[185]

Every evening during the crisis McNamara was briefed at 10:00 p.m. in Flag Plot on the status of the quarantine and CINCLANT forces alerted for Cuban contingencies.[186] He was thus exposed daily to all of the information available to the CNO on the status of CINCLANT operations and Soviet

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[185] Carmichael, letter to author, March 8, 1988.

[186] Ibid; Houser, interview by author, February 11, 1988.

forces in Cuba, the Caribbean, and the Atlantic. The detailed knowledge of the movements of U.S. and Soviet ships that McNamara showed in EXCOMM meetings and his quizzing of Admiral Anderson on the positions of Navy ships show that McNamara paid close attention to the Flag Plot briefings.[187]

The next level in the Chain of Command was CINCLANT, Admiral Dennison, headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia. In mid-1961 CINCLANT was tacked by JCS to prepare contingency plans for military operations against Cuba. CINCLANT created Joint Task Force 122 (JTF-122), a contingency task force with forces designated but not actually assigned, for Cuban contingency operations. Commander Second Fleet was designated Commander JTF-122; Army, Air Force, and Navy component commanders were also designated. On October 18 JCS designated CINCLANT overall commander for operations against Cuba, including blockade and contingency operations. In response, CINCLANT on October 20 disestablished JTF-122 and assumed command of all Cuban contingency operations. Army Lieutenant General Louis W. Truman was designated CINCLANT Chief of Staff for Cuban Contingency Operations, in charge of a separate CINCLANT Contingency Staff responsible for air strike and invasion planning.[188]

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[187] Anderson, "Reminiscences," p. 558; Chew, "Reminiscences," pp. 332-33; Carmichael, letter to author, March 8, 1988; Abel, pp. 154-55.

[188] "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 17, 22, 39-40; "DOD Operations," p. 1; Ward, "Diary," p. 2.

CINCLANT had three component commanders during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Navy component commander, Commander in Chief U.S. Naval Forces Atlantic (CINCNAVLANT),was Commander in Chief Atlantic Fleet (CINCLANTFLT). Admiral Dennison was CINCLANTFLT as well as CINCLANT, and the CINCLANTFLT staff was integrated into the CINCLANT unified command staff. Vice Admiral Wallace M. Beakley, Deputy Commander in Chief Atlantic, was in charge of CINCLANTFLT functions in the CINCLANT staff. Additionally, to facilitate CINCLANTFLT control of quarantine operations a separate Quarantine Plot headed by Rear Admiral Reynold D. Hogle was established in the CINCLANT OPCON Center. The CINCLANT Quarantine Plot maintained the tactical picture at sea for Admiral Dennison and Vice Admiral Beakley. The Air Force component commander, Commander in Chief Air Force Atlantic (CINCAFLANT), was Commander Tactical Air Command (TAC), General Walter C. Sweeney, Jr., headquartered at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia. The Army component commander, Commander in Chief Army Atlantic (CINCARLANT), was Commanding General Continental Army Command (USCONARC), General Herbert B. Powell, headquartered at Fort Monroe, Virginia. CINCARLANT and CINCAFLANT set up a Forward Command Post at Homestead Air Force Base, Florida. Prior to the crisis, the only forces assigned to CINCLANT were Navy and Marine Corps forces under CINCLANTFLT. Army (USCONARC) and Air Force (TAC) units designated for CINCLANT contingency operations were under the command of Commander in Chief Strike Command (CINCSTRIKE). On October 22 CINCSTRIKE transferred command of Army and Air Force units designated for Cuban operations to CINCLANT. On that date CINCLANT gained command of all component forces that would participate in Cuban contingency operations.[189]

Under the CINCLANT component commanders were several Task Forces. The Navy and Marine Corps Task Forces under CINCLANTFLT are listed in Table 2. Two of these (TF 81 and TF 83) were standing Task Forces operational prior to the crisis, while the others were contingency Task Forces activated for the crisis. In addition to these Task Forces, the Subordinate Unified Commander for the Caribbean, Commander Antilles Defense Command (COMANTDEFCOM), reported directly to CINCLANT. COMANTDEFCOM was important primarily because Commander Naval Base Guantanamo reported to him via Commander Caribbean Sea Frontier (COMCARSEAFRON, the Navy component commander for COMANTDEFCOM).[176] Under the Task Forces listed in Table 2 were a large number of Task Groups, the number and composition of which changed frequently

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[189] "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 22-24, 49-50; Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 415, 425. The Army and Air Force component commanders were designated on October 20. Prior to that date, lower-ranking Army and Air Force commanders had been component commanders for JTF-122.

[190] COMANTDEFCOM forces also included Navy and Marine Corps units on various Caribbean islands and the Puerto Rico Air National Guard.

Table 2
Navy Task Force Organization

Task Force	Task Force Title and Commander
TF 135	Carrier Strike Force Rear Admiral Robert J. Stroh, Commander Carrier Division Six, relieved by Rear Admiral John T. Hayward, Commander Carrier Division Two
TF 136	Blockade Force Vice Admiral Alfred G. Ward, Commander Second Fleet, relieved by Rear Admiral John W. Ailes, III, Commander Cruiser Destroyer Flotilla Six
TF 137	Combined Quarantine Force (Latin American/U.S.) Rear Admiral John A. Tyree, Commander South Atlantic Force
TF 128	Amphibious Force Rear Admiral Horacio Rivero, Jr., Commander Amphibious Force Atlantic
TF 129	Landing Force Lieutenant General Robert B. Luckey, USMC, Commanding General Fleet Marine Force Atlantic and Commanding General Second Marine Expeditionary Force
TF 81/83	Anti-Submarine Warfare Force Atlantic Vice Admiral Edmund B. Taylor

Source: "CINCLANT Historical Account," passim.

during the crisis. The command structure for the Navy forces assigned to Cuban contingencies was thus highly complex due to the size and scope of the forces involved.

The Army and Air Force had two primary Task Forces for Cuban contingency operations. Under the Army component commander, CINCARLANT, was the Army Task Force (TF 125) for the invasion of Cuba, commanded by Commanding General Eighteenth Airborne Corps. Under the Air Force component commander, CINCAFLANT, was the Air Task Force for air strikes against Cuba, commanded by Commander Nineteenth Air Force. CINCARLANT and CINCAFLANT had additional Task Forces for other operations related to Cuba. The final Task Force under CINCLANT was the Joint Unconventional Warfare Task Force Atlantic (JUWTFA), consisting of Army Special Forces, Navy SEALs, and Air Force Air Commando units.[191] This brief review of the basic command organization of the forces committed to Cuban contingencies suggests the magnitude of the task faced by the White House in attempting to exercise close control over U.S. military operations.

United States communications capabilities had made significant advances since 1958, allowing a greater degree of direct control over naval operations than had ever been possible before. CINCLANT, Flag Plot, NMCC, and the White House Situation Room all had the ability to communicate directly with ships at sea over voice radio, if they so desired. Three advances in communications technology were particularly important: First, secure (voice encryption, commonly called "scrambled") telephone lines connected the White House, Flag Plot, NMCC, and CINCLANT. This allowed discussion of classified information without risk of Soviet interception. Second, high frequency (HF), single sideband (SSB) clear (unencrypted) and secure (encrypted) voice radio

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[191] "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 22-23.

equipment was just coming into widespread use. Prior to this, long-range radio communication had been limited to radioteletype and radiotelegraph (manual Morse). HF/SSB radio allowed commanders ashore to speak directly with forces afloat, a crucial capability for exercising direct control of naval operations. The CNO had established a Composite Fleet SSB Command Net and CINCLANT had two SSB nets of his own. Third, the Navy had long-range HF Fleet Radioteletype Broad-casts with on-line encryption for message communications between shore stations and ships at sea. This system greatly expedited the flow of information by eliminating slow manual encryption and transmission of messages.[192]

In addition to these communications systems, telephone and telegraph lines were also used extensively for communications among shore commands. Three types of lines were available: military-owned lines, leased commercial lines, and engineered military circuits (commercial lines with a preplanned standby military capability). The Defense Communications Agency, created only the year before, managed this overall system. The number of commercial lines leased by CINCLANT and its component commands increased from 106

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[192] "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 24-26, 28, 32. Only a few ships--primarily carriers and other large ships commonly used as flagships--had the secure voice capability and several older vessels did not have any HF/SSB equipment at all.

prior to the crisis to 511 at the height of the crisis.[193] Microwave communications were not yet in widespread use. The first U.S. radio-relay communications satellite, Samos II, had been launched in January 1961, but satellite communications were still essentially experimental.

Modern communications equipment, especially HF/SSB voice communications with ships at sea, were perceived by civilian leaders as providing the capabilities they needed to exercise close control of naval operations during the crisis. Vice Admiral Houser, who worked closely with McNamara and Gilpatric, noted this: "Modern communications also affected the civilians. There was a fascination with this. They had an attitude of 'I'm in charge,' and that they had the tools to be in charge."[194] This attitude was a natural corollary to their desire to maintain control of events in the crisis. In describing the quarantine, CINCLANT noted that centralized control of the operation determined the manner in which communications capabilities were utilized:

> . . . this operation was directed in great part from the seat of government in Washington. In this connection, there was a steady flow of instructions from Washington to CINCLANT which required rapid dissemination to the operating forces. Also, there was a pressing requirement for a prompt, accurate and complete flow of the current status and results of

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[193] Ibid, pp. 25-27. Also see Carter, pp. 233-57; Blair, pp. 51-65.

[194] Houser, interview by author, February 11, 1988.

> operations. Although the CW [radioteletype and radiotelegraph] communications were generally fast and good, the requirement for expediting matters required extensive use of the single sideband voice radio.[195]

Thus, the President's determination to maintain control of events in the crisis led to highly centralized control of naval operations, which in turn generated the demands placed on the communications system.

On the other hand, although the President had HF/SSB voice radio available in the White House Situation Room, there is no evidence that he ever spoke with any Navy ships or commanders at sea.[196] It is certain, however, that he

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[195] "CINCLANT Historical Account," p. 108.

[196] Admiral Dennison states in his oral history that officials in Washington, apparently including officials in the White House, occasionally tried to contact commanders at sea, but that he told them to "get off my circuits." He makes no suggestion, however, that the President was ever on the radio or that any of the Presidents advisors ever issued orders to ships at sea over voice radio. Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 421. Admiral Anderson, Admiral Griffin, Admiral Rivero, Vice Admiral Hayward, Vice Admiral Stroh, Rear Admiral Wylie, and Captain Robert J. Wissman (Operations Officer on the staff of Commander Carrier Division 18, commander of the USS Essex HUK Group, which was part of the quarantine force) all state that there were no such communications. Anderson, interview by author, January 25, 1988; Griffin, letter to author, April 6, 1988; Rivero, letter to author, March 10, 1988; Vice Admiral John T. Hayward, letter to author, February 17, 1988; Stroh, letter to author, February 18, 1988; Wylie, letter to author, April 13, 1988; Captain Robert J. Wissman, letter to author, March 4, 1988. Admiral Chew, Admiral Sharp, and Admiral Ward make no mention of such communications in their oral histories. Chew, "Reminiscences," pp. 315-41; Sharp, "Reminiscences," pp. 164-69; Ward, "Reminiscences," p. 199. Additionally, some three dozen Commanding Officers of ships that participated in the Cuban Missile Crisis all stated in letters to the author or in interviews by the author that they had not heard the President or McNamara on the HF/SSB net.

listened to reports coming in from the quarantine line over HF/SSB voice radio nets. Admiral Ward states that Flag Plot and the White House were monitoring his HF/SSB communications with CINCLANT.[197] It is possible, even likely, that during high interest operations at sea the President's advisors got on the HF/SSB net to request further details (perhaps identifying their station as the White House). This would account for Admiral Dennison's remarks about telling Washington stations to get off his net as well as the recollection of many Navy officers that the President never talked on the HF/SSB net. If this interpretation is accurate, it means that the President voluntarily denied himself a powerful communications tool that was literally at his fingertips--perhaps because he realized the disruption and animosity it would cause in the chain of command.

Direct HF/SSB communications from ships at sea to Washington--NMCC, Flag Plot, and the White House Situation Room monitoring the net--appear to have been used only in two situations. The first situation was during intercepts of Soviet merchant ships. Admiral Ward states that U.S. Navy ships were directed to report the name, description and visible deck cargo of ships they intercepted to CINCLANTFLT

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[197] Ward, "Reminiscences," p. 199; Ward, "Sea Power in the Cuban Crisis," Address by Vice Admiral Alfred G. Ward, February 5, 1963 (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, Office of Public Affairs, News Release No. 151-63), p. 6.

(Quarantine Plot) and to the CNO (Flag Plot). Captain James W. Foust, Commanding Officer of USS John R. Pierce (DD 753) during the crisis, states that a "running account" of the boarding of the Lebanese freighter Marucla was provided to Commander Second Fleet and CINCLANTFLT on the HF/SSB net.[198] This net was also monitored in the CNO's Flag Plot and the White House Situation Room). The second situation was during the trailing of known Soviet submarines. Captain George L. Dickey, Jr., Commanding Officer of USS Lawe (DD 763) during the crisis, states that while trailing a Soviet submarine he was directed to come up on the voice net for direct communications with Flag Plot. Captain Robert J. Wissman, Operations Officer for Commander Carrier Division Eighteen, states that USS Essex (CVS 9) did the same thing, but carried it one step further. When ASW helicopters or aircraft from Essex were trailing a Soviet submarine, their reports would be relayed "real time" to Norfolk (CINCLANT Quarantine Plot) and Washington (Flag Plot).[199] Although all of these ASW reports could have been monitored in the White House Situation Room--at least by the Situation Room staff, which could immediately notify the President and his advisors of urgent developments--there is no conclusive

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[198] Ward, "Diary," p. 11; Captain James W. Foust, letter to author, March 10, 1988.

[199] Captain George L. Dickey, Jr., letter to author, April 20, 1988; Wissman, letter to author, March 4, 1988.

evidence that the President or his advisors ever monitored the progress of ASW operations "real time." Given that President Kennedy did not attempt to control other operations while they were actually in progress, it is unlikely that he would have monitored ASW operations, which can (and did) drag on for days. On the other hand, the Situation Room staff had the capability of using reports coming over HF/SSB voice radio to keep their charts updated with the latest information on Soviet submarines.[200]

Opinions as to how well the Defense Communications System and Navy communications system performed during the crisis vary widely. The CINCLANT history of the crisis concludes that overall the Defense system performed well, demonstrating tremendous flexibility and rapid expansion of capability, but that it did experience problems. Problems included lack of telephone and telegraph lines in the Southeastern United States to accommodate the build-up of forces there, insufficient portable communications equipment, lack of compatibility between the communications equipment of the three services, insufficient secure voice and on-line encryption equipment, lack of frequency coordination, and heavily overloaded circuits with attendant

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[200] Participants could not recall specifically if this was done, but did recall that information on Soviet submarines was kept as up to date as possible. It appears that message situation reports, rather than voice radio reports, were the principle source of information.

backlogs of messages.[201] All of these problems would have degraded the President's ability to exercise close control of military operations.

CINCLANT provides a similarly mixed view of how well the Navy communications system performed. The CINCLANT conclusion would appear to be favorable: "Ship/shore communications with the commands afloat and tactical communications between the task force units were excellent throughout most of the period of the crisis. Radio propagation phenomena and other factors affecting reliability caused less than 10% outage on radio circuits."[202] However, this statement only addresses the technical ability to complete radio circuits, which is just one aspect of communications performance.

The CINCLANT report also contains a long list of problems. The Fleet Radioteletype Broadcast system was in the midst of converting to faster teletypes, which created traffic backlogs as messages had to be transmitted on separate broadcasts for old and new teleypes. There was an overwhelming number of messages--the number of messages per month during the crisis was more than three times greater than the pre-crisis average--and a large number of excessively long messages, which were difficult to transmit

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[201] "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 25-30.

[202] Ibid, p. 33.

and often had to be sent repeatedly. The total volume of traffic exceeded the capacity of the Fleet Radioteletype Broadcast, requiring that an additional broadcast be initiated for broadcasting to major afloat commands. An inordinate proportion of messages were given high transmission precedence--an attempt to expedite time-critical orders that backfired, creating a backlog of high precedence messages. An unusually high proportion of messages were classified Secret or Top Secret, which created backlogs due the requirement for on-line encryption of such traffic. The incredible volume of message traffic created a shortage of radiomen that could only be partially alleviated by borrowing personnel from other commands.[203] All of these problems are generated by centralized control of large-scale naval operations.

Participants in the crisis recount instances of operational problems caused by difficulties with message communications, confirming that the problems reported by CINCLANT had an impact on the crisis. On at least one occasion a commander afloat did not receive a crucial message. At the start of the crisis Rear Admiral Ernest E. Christiansen, Commander Carrier Division 18, was embarked in the ASW carrier USS <u>Essex</u> (CVS 9), which was conducting air operations training at sea off Guantanamo. On October 23

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[203] Ibid, pp. 32-35. These problems persisted until late November, when U.S. forces began standing down.

Rear Admiral Christiansen did not receive a CINCLANTFLT message directing <u>Essex</u> to join the Blockade Force east of the Bahamas--important because <u>Essex</u> was designated to intercept a Soviet ship the next morning.[204] Captain Donald L. Lassell, Commander Destroyer Division 601 and Commander of the Florida Strait Protection of Shipping Patrol during the crisis, has also described severe problems with message communications. When the quarantine was announced, Captain Lassell, who was headquartered ashore at Key West, had to recall his ships from a contingency holding area northeast of Key West in order to send them to patrol sectors in the Florida Strait:

> ...all I had to do is call my ships back. Simple: I wrote an OPIMMEDIATE [Operational Immediate transmission precedence, second only to Flash] message to my Flagship, telling them to come back. You never heard of the Air Force, though. Every one of their messages is OPIMMEDIATE. The backlog was impossible. . . . <u>It took 38 hours for my first OPIMMEDIATE message to get through to Saufley [the Flagship], no more than 150 miles away</u>.205

Had Captain Lassell not been able to get a message to <u>Saufley</u> via helicopter, there would have been no ships on patrol between Cuba and the United States for the first day

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[204] Rear Admiral Ernest E. Christiansen, interview by author, February 3, 1988; Wissman, letter to author, March 4, 1988. <u>Essex</u> was able to make the commitment because Rear Admiral Christiansen on his own authority had moved the carrier toward the Windward Passage in anticipation of some sort of tasking.

[205] Captain Donald L. Lassell, letter to author, May 11, 1988. Emphasis is his.

and a half of the crisis. Captain Carmichael described the scene in Washington: "Communications were chaotic. . . . extremely wordy messages, including operations orders, hit the air in numbers you would not believe. The highest priority traffic was taking up to 48 hours to go from originator to addressees."[206] These are the type of communications problems that give rise to decoupling and degrade crisis management.

The HF/SSB voice radio net also experienced problems. Not all of the ships had received the new HF/SSB equipment when the crisis erupted. CINCLANT reported a shortfall of 45 HF/SSB units that could not be alleviated during the crisis. Flag Plot and the Situation Room could not monitor every merchant ship intercept and submarine prosecution "real-time" because not every Navy ship had HF/SSB equipment and a few ships suffered casualties to their HF/SSB equipment. Participants in the crisis recall great difficulties with the HF/SSB voice circuits. The three HF/SSB nets in use during the crisis were often overloaded due to too many stations attempting to use a circuit, excessively long and detailed reporting requirements, and excessively long transmissions by higher authorities. Voice HF communications (even HF/SSB) are much more vulnerable to radio propagation problems than are radioteletype or

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[206] Carmichael, letter to author, March 8, 1988.

radiotelegraph HF communications. At times USS Essex had to relay HF/SSB voice transmissions between CINCLANT and Admiral Ward due to HF propagation problems. Admiral Ward noted that "Communications within the [quarantine] line and on other circuits were not good due to poor radio frequency propagation in the atmosphere."[207] Thus, the key technological innovation that made direct control possible--HF/SSB voice radio--was degraded by a number of factors, among them excessive use of the capability.

There is an irony in the communications problems experienced during the Cuban Missile Crisis: the more communications circuits are used, the less they support the needs of their users. Military men understand this irony through their operational experience. Military communications procedures emphasize brevity of transmissions and military command procedures emphasize delegation of control. Sending a brief message executing a plan already held by recipients or simply stating the objective to be achieved is much more efficient than sending detailed plans specifying every aspect of an operation. The need for direct control must be balanced against the harmful effects of overloading communications channels.

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[207] Ward, "Diary," p. 12; Christiansen, interview by author, February 3, 1988; Wissman, letter to author, March 4, 1988; Captain Charles H. Morrison, Commander Destroyer Squadron 24, interview by author, February 3, 1988; Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 421.

Soon after the quarantine of Cuba was announced on October 22 the President and his advisors became aware that they did not have sufficient communications capabilities to manage the crisis in the manner they desired. During the first EXCOMM meeting on October 23, the "problem of effective communications" was discussed and the President's Science Advisor, Jerome B. Weisner, was appointed to head an inter-departmental review of the problem. Dr. Weisner presented an initial briefing on the communications situation at the October 24 morning EXCOMM meeting and the President "directed that most urgent action be taken by State, Defense and CIA to improve communications worldwide, but particularly in the Caribbean area."[208] Thus, rather than adapt its crisis management approach to existing communications capabilities, the Kennedy Administration sought to expand those capabilities to support its approach. As the previous discussion of communications problems revealed, that effort was unsuccessful--the problems did not abate until after the crisis peaked and U.S. forces began to stand down.

In summary, although significant advances had been made in communications capabilities, U.S. leaders and the

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[208] "October 23 EXCOMM Minutes," p. 3; McGeorge Bundy, "Executive Committee Record of Action, October 24, 1962, 10:00 A.M., Meeting No. 3," pp. 1-2 (declassified 1978. National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file. Cited hereafter as "October 24 Morning EXCOMM Meeting Record of Action.").

military chain of command experienced serious communications problems in the Cuban Missile Crisis. In some instances it took longer to transmit messages to commanders off the coast of the United States in 1962 than it took to transmit messages to commanders in the Taiwan Strait in 1958. This demonstrates conclusively that command and control capabilities are not directly, or even primarily, a function of technology. Variance in crisis outcomes--in terms of the degree to which national leaders maintain control of events and prevent inadvertent escalation--is not accounted for by variation in command and control technology. In other words, better radios do not guarantee better crisis management. There are additional variables that affect how effectively military operations are controlled in a crisis.

In the Cuban Missile Crisis the primary determinant was the emphasis on exercising close, detailed, direct control of military operations. Emphasis on direct control was not accompanied by consideration of the implications this might have for the effective conduct of military operations. There was a lack of appreciation for the organizational, procedural, and operational requirements for effectively exercising direct control. As has been shown, impulsive efforts to exercise direct control generated communications problems that degraded the effectiveness of direct control. The President's civilian advisors appear not to have appreciated that communications capabilities need to be jealously guarded rather than ruthlessly exploited.

President Kennedy's desire to maintain control of events was implemented impulsively during the crisis, reflecting the novelty and complexity of the situation and the need for improvisation to meet the President's crisis management objectives. No attempt was made to formulate a comprehensive command and control doctrine that designated methods of control for specific operations, what decision-making authority would be delegated and what would be reserved for the President, and procedures for shifting control of operations up and down the chain of command. These issues were addressed on an *ad hoc* basis in response to concerns over the implications of particular operations.

The implicit objective was to exercise direct control over all military and naval operations. This, of course, was not feasible. The President and his top advisors were forced by the immense scale of operations being conducted to focus their attention on particular operations. Seven areas appear to have been singled out for close attention. Navy quarantine operations, particularly the intercept and boarding of Soviet bloc ships, received first priority for White House attention and control. Vice Admiral Houser has pointed out additional areas of attention: "The big concerns were reconnaissance flights over Cuba, the [SAC] airborne alert, civil defense, the Marines, and air strikes."[209] The Marines, he clarified, meant invasion plans and preparations. Records from EXCOMM meetings reveal that all of these topics except civil defense were discussed at length. The records of the EXCOMM meetings held October 23 and 26 indicate that civil defense, particularly measures for the southeastern United States, was a concern, but was generally discussed in separate meetings.[210] The final area that received close attention was operations by Navy ships close to Cuban waters. Whenever Navy ships trailing Soviet vessels or conducting other surveillance approached the coast of Cuba, their movements were closely monitored. To summarize, the areas that received close attention were quarantine operations, reconnaissance flights over Cuba, the SAC DEFCON 2 alert, civil defense, invasion and air strike preparations, and operations near Cuba.

What is striking is that this focusing of attention appears to have occurred without a deliberate decision as to which military operations warranted the President's direct attention. None of the available records show this topic being discussed with the President or among his advisors during the many meetings held in the week prior to the

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[209] Houser, interview by author, February 11, 1988.

[210] McGeorge Bundy, "Executive Committee Record of Action, October 23, 1962, 6 PM, Meeting No. 2," p. 1 (Declassified 1978. National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file. Cited Hereafter as "October 23 Evening EXCOMM Meeting Record of Action."); "Ocotber 26 EXCOMM Meeting Summary Record," pp. 1-2.

crisis or during the crisis. The President apparently desired to control the operations with greatest likelihood of involving U.S. forces in an incident with Soviet or Cuban forces. Several observers have noted that the President was concerned that an incident might occur, particularly between Navy ships on the quarantine line and Soviet merchant ships.[211] This accounts for attention to quarantine operations, reconnaissance flights over Cuba, and surveillance operations near Cuba. Concern for incidents also should have led to close control of Navy ASW operations, which generated the most intense interactions with Soviet forces during the crisis. However, although the President was aware of the danger of a confrontation with Soviet submarines and had the ability to monitor ASW operations "real time," he made no effort to exercise direct control while submarines were being trailed.[212] Thus, selection of particular operations for close attention and control to appears to have been spontaneous and intuitive, rather than planned and carefully considered.

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[211] Shepard, interview by author, February 10, 1988; Chew, "Reminiscences," p. 318; Hilsman, p. 213; Sorenson, p. 708. Also see Abel, p. 153; Pachter, pp. 42-43.

[212] On the President's concern over an incident with Soviet submarines, see Robert Kennedy, p. 70; Sorenson, pp. 705, 710; Schlesinger, Robert Kennedy, p. 514. Despite this concern, ASW was not a focus of attention. Vice Admiral Houser told the author, referring to McNamara, Gilpatric and the EXCOMM, that "ASW was viewed as part of support operations, it wasn't one of the major concerns." Houser, interview by author, February 11, 1988.

There was little consistency in the manner that operations were controlled. The White House would pay little attention to a particular operation, tacitly delegating control of it, then suddenly intervene and attempt to exercise close control over it. Just as suddenly, the White House would move on to other problems, leaving the chain of command in the dark as to the extent of their authority. This inconsistency--impulsively seizing control of tactical operations--appears to have been what annoyed military commanders the most.

A fundamental principle of military command, often called "unity of command," is that a commander must always know from whom he is receiving orders. The U.S. armed forces use formal procedures to designate commanders and transfer control or operations among them in order to avoid ambiguity and conflicts over who is authorized to give orders. For example, the Navy uses formal "CHOP" (Change of Operational Commander) procedures to designate the precise time at which control over a unit shifts from one commander to another. Although these procedures for transferring control are formal, they are also flexible and rapid. Transferring control of a unit or operation can be done by written message or instantaneously over voice radio. There are also standard procedures for automatically transferring control, intended for emergency situations in which a commander has to issue urgent orders without formally assuming control. But even in this situation, military standing orders specify procedures to avoid ambiguity of control. Thus, the military had concepts and procedures for shifting operational control that could have been adapted to meet the needs of the President.

The White House did not implement formal procedures for for designating which operations the President wished to control or for transferring control of specific operations up and down the chain of command. Navy commanders never knew when the White House might suddenly intervene in their operations or countermand orders they had given. Simple, rapid procedures for designating when the White House was exercising direct control would have enhanced the President's ability to control military operations while avoiding ambiguity of command. There is no evidence that the need for such procedures was even considered.

This was a failure not only of the President's civilian advisors, who had the excuse of having virtually no experience with military operations, but also of the Joint Chiefs--particularly the Chairman. During the crisis General Taylor was the only JCS member who routinely met with the President, attended EXCOMM meetings, and received orders from the Secretary of Defense. He was in the perfect position to address the command and control implications of the President's approach to managing the crisis, but apparently never made an effort to do so.

Senior Navy leaders, particularly Admiral Anderson and Admiral Dennison, also could have devised procedures for facilitating White House control, but instead made a concerted effort to protect the chain of command from what they viewed as White House interference. Admiral Anderson discusses this frankly in his oral history: "I was determined, as far as the Navy was concerned, that we had two principle considerations. . . . Second, that there was to be a firm impediment by the higher authorities of the Navy for any direct control or interference by our civilian authorities to our operating forces. [sic] We did not want, and I had it pretty well set up, to prevent any intrusion by McNamara or anybody else in the direct operations of any ship or squadron or anything of the sort."[213] Admirals Anderson and Dennison reacted as they did not only because direct White House control of operations affronted their professional sensibilities, but also because of the manner in which the White House sought to exercise direct control. Rather than work with the military to devise command procedures appropriate for the President's desire to control events, McNamara implemented on an ad hoc basis what was in effect a major change in U.S. command and control doctrine.

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[213] Anderson, "Reminiscences," p. 550. He made the same point to the author: "I particularly took the position that control of the ships at sea had to go by the chain of command." Anderson, interview by author, January 25, 1988. Also see Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 421.

To place this discussion in the analytical framework introduced in Chapter IV, the Kennedy Administration sought to employ methods of control at the tight end of the "tightness of control" spectrum. The objective was to exercise positive direct control, in which communications links with operational forces are used to control their movements and actions on a real-time basis. The White House was not able to effectively exercise positive direct control over all military operations due to limitations in communications systems and the vast scale of the operations being conducted. The President and his advisors focused their attention on specific operations and made _de facto_ delegations of authority in other operational areas, tacitly relying on methods of delegated control. Employing a combination of direct and delegated control is not unusual, the Eisenhower Administration did the same thing in the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis. What was unusual was the Kennedy Administration's reluctance to admit that it could not possibly exercise positive direct control over all the military operations in progress and its reliance on _de facto_ rather than formal delegation of authority.

As part of their effort to maintain control over military operations, the President and his advisors paid close attention to the mechanisms of indirect control. The manner in which the quarantine was conducted illustrates this. Rather than allow the Navy to carry out the quarantine in accordance with its standing orders, McNamara and the President had the CNO prepare mission orders specifying how the operation was to be conducted, then carefully reviewed and approved them. The procedures contained in the mission orders were changed very little from those contained in Navy standing orders, but the President had ascertained that the quarantine would be conducted in a manner that supported his political objectives.[214]

The manner in which contingency plans were used during the crisis is particularly interesting. In mid-1961, not long after the Bay of Pigs affair, the President directed the Joint Chiefs to commence contingency planning for

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[214] The original plans for a limited blockade were drawn up by Admiral Dennison and Vice Admiral Ward on October 20. The CNO briefed the President on Navy quarantine plans the afternoon of October 21 and McNamara approved the quarantine orders that evening. See "DOD Operations," p. 2; Ward, "Diary," pp. 4-6; Abel, p. 107. Admiral Anderson and Admiral Griffin state the procedures were basically the same as those in Navy tactical publications. Anderson, interview by author, January 25, 1988; Griffin, letter to author, April 6, 1988. Vice Admiral Caldwell, who drafted the instructions for the quarantine, states that the only change made to them was to delete POL from the initial list of prohibited items. Caldwell, letter to author, March 14, 1988. One of the most important innovations, to put Russian-speaking officers on the quarantine line ships, originated with CINCLANT. Dennison, "Reminiscences," pp. 428. Captain Nicholas S. Mikhalevsky, Commanding Officer of USS <u>Joseph P. Kennedy</u> (DD 850), one of two ships that boarded the <u>Marucla</u>, states that he followed the procedure for intercept and boarding "as described in the pertinent NWP [Naval Warfare Publication]." Captain Nicholas S. Mikhalevsky, letter to author, March 23, 1988.

military action against Cuba. JCS assigned responsibility for these plans to CINCLANT because Cuba was in his area of responsibility. Initially two contingency plans were produced: Operation Plan [OPLAN] 312-61 (later renumbered 312-62) for air strikes against Cuba and OPLAN 314-61 for invasion of Cuba. These plans were tentatively approved by JCS in the fall of 1961. Later in the year JCS directed CINCLANT to prepare an alternative invasion contingency plan, which was ready by early 1962 and designated OPLAN 316-62. All three CINCLANT OPLANs were reviewed and updated continuously through October 1962.[215]

OPLAN 312-61 was a contingency plan for quick reaction air strikes against Cuban air defenses in preparation for the Army airborne assault contained in OPLAN 314-61. Prior to September 1962 Cuba had only rudimentary air defenses, so OPLAN 312-61 contained relatively small-scale air strikes covering a four-hour period. As the Soviets modernized and expanded Cuba's air defenses it became apparent that this plan would not be adequate. On September 7, 1962, the Tactical Air Command began working on an entirely new plan. This plan, code named "Rockpile," was approved by the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Curtis E. Lemay, on

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[215] "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 17-22; Vice Admiral Wallace M. Beakley, "Presentation to the Naval War College," December 11, 1962 (Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC, Personal Papers of Vice Admiral Wallace M. Beakley, Box 6, Book 4), p. 15; Ward, "Diary," pp. 2-3; Dennison, "Reminiscences," pp. 415-17.

September 27. The next day it was approved by CINCLANT and adopted as OPLAN 312-62. When he approved the plan, General Lemay set October 20 as the target date for readiness to execute OPLAN 312-62. Throughout October the Air Force carried out preparations to launch air strikes against Cuba, including relocating aircraft, prepositioning fuel and ammunition, setting up communications channels, and flying training combat missions against simulated Cuban targets (such as mock Soviet SAM sites).[216]

OPLAN 312-62 contained three air strike options. The first, code named "Fire Hose," provided for "the selective destruction of a surface-to-air missile site or sites as directed by CINCLANT." It provided the option of small-scale air strikes for retaliatory or demonstrative purposes. Fire Hose could be launched on two hours notice. The second option, code named "Shoe Black," provided for larger air strikes against a wider range of targets, but limited as prescribed by CINCLANT. Targets included airfields, SAM sites, and missile complexes. Shoe Black also could be launched on two hours notice. The third option, code named "Scabbards 312," provided for destruction of all Cuban defenses (air, naval and ground) in preparation for invasion. Scabbards 312 could be launched on twelve hours notice. During the crisis, two additional options

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[216] "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 27, 162-63.

were added to OPLAN 312-63: "Full House," for destruction of all surface-to-air missile sites in Cuba, and "Royal Flush," for destruction of the entire Cuban air defense system. These two options could be launched on two hours notice. As the CINCLANT report notes, discovery of Soviet MRBMs in Cuba shifted the purpose of OPLAN 312-62: "The newly discovered ballistic missile sites had altered the purpose of the plan from the original objective of defeating Cuban air to one of defeating Cuban air and preventing destructive missile attacks on the United States." Thus, after October 16 Soviet offensive missile sites in Cuba were added to OPLAN 312-62[217]

Most OPLAN 312-62 air strikes were to be carried out by the Air Force. The Navy role was limited to defense of Guantanamo and pre-landing air strikes in amphibious objective areas. Additionally, however, a large number of Navy and Marine shore-based fighter and attack aircraft were placed under Air Force command to augment the Tactical Air

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[217] "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 17-20, 163; Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, Memorandum JSCM-821-62, "Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense: Timing Factors," October 25, 1962 (Declassified 1984. Reproduced in Johns, "Naval Quarantine," p. 90. Cited hereafter as "JSCM-821-62). The code name "Scabbards" originally designated the operations that were to be carried out under OPLAN 316-62, which included the third option in OPLAN 312-62. On October 23 JCS directed that the code name "Scabbards" be used to cover all operations related to Soviet deployment of offensive weapons in Cuba, thus covering the quarantine as well. However, the quarantine was <u>not</u> designated or referred to as "Operation Scabbards."

Command for execution of the Air Force portion of OPLAN 312-62.[218]

OPLAN 314-61 was for invasion of Cuba and overthrow of the Castro government. CINCLANT states that "The plan called for a simultaneous amphibious and airborne assault in the Havana area by a Joint Task Force within eighteen days after the receipt of the order to execute." The Joint Task Force, JTF-122, consisted of the Eighteenth Airborne Corps, Nineteenth Air Force, Second Marine Expeditionary Force, Amphibious Force Atlantic, Joint Unconventional Warfare Task Force Atlantic, and other units. The plan contained an option, designated "314 Golf," for execution of the invasion on four days notice. This was to be achieved by executing OPLAN 314-61, then halting it at D-4, four days before invasion. On October 26 JCS cancelled OPLAN 314-61 and directed that OPLAN 316-62 be used, allowing commanders to focus on a single contingency invasion plan.[219]

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[218] "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 17-20. The Navy had two attack carrier air groups afloat (about fourteen fighter and attack squadrons), one attack carrier air group ashore (six squadrons), and about six Navy and Marine squadrons ashore in Guantanamo and Puerto Rico designated for air strikes against Cuba. The Tactical Air Command was assigned two attack carrier air groups ashore (about twelve squadrons) and a Marine air group (three squadrons) for air strikes against Cuba. Additionally, the Continental Air Defense Command was assigned one Marine and two Navy fighter squadrons and several Navy shore-based airborne early warning aircraft to augment air defenses in Florida.

[219] Ibid, pp. 20-21. "D-4" is the military abbreviation designating four days prior to "D-Day," which in turn is the designated day for launching an assault.

OPLAN 316-62 was originally drafted as a quick reaction joint airborne and amphibious assault against Cuba. It differed from OPLAN 314-61 primarily in that it used much smaller forces for the initial assault, allowing an invasion to be launched on shorter notice. OPLAN 316-62 originally called for the initial assault to be launched five days after the President ordered an invasion. The remainder of the invasion force was to be landed no later than eighteen days after the order was given. On October 17 the interval from decision to initial assault was increased to seven days, which allowed more forces to be landed in the initial assault and reduced the time between initial assault and landing of reinforcements. OPLAN 312-62 air strikes were to commence twelve hours after the invasion order was given and continue throughout the week prior to D-Day.[220]

As the full extent of the Cuban military build-up became known, the forces committed to OPLAN 316-62 the invasion were significantly increased. The Fifth Marine Expeditionary Brigade from Camp Pendleton was added to the initial assault and the Army's First Armored Division was added to the forces to be landed later. Total Marine Corps forces included a total of nine battalion landing teams, roughly 28,000 troops. Army forces to be landed in the initial assault included the 82nd and 101st Airborne

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[220] Ibid, pp. 21-23; JSCM-821-62, p.1.

Divisions, the First Infantry Division, two artillery battalions, a light tank company, and Special Forces units. Follow-on Army forces included the Second Infantry Division, the First Armored Division, three artillery battalions and two artillery groups, two tank battalions, and an array of support forces. Army tactical nuclear weapon units--equipped with Honest John, Long John, and Davy Crockett rockets--were alerted, but placed in an "on-call" status in the United States rather than included in the invasion force. Total Army forces committed to the invasion of Cuba exceeded 100,000 troops.[221]

In addition to these three contingency plans, the Navy had two additional contingency plans. CINCLANTFLT Operation Order (OPORD) 36-61 was for the evacuation and defense of Guantanamo. The evacuation and reinforcement portions of this OPORD were carried out during the crisis, but no Cuban threat to the base developed, so the combat operations contained in the OPORD were not executed. CINCLANTFLT OPORD 41-62, issued October 3, 1962, was for a total blockade of Cuba in support of OPLANs 314-61 or 316-62. When the President decided to impose a limited "search and seizure" blockade of offensive weapons to Cuba, OPORD 41-62 was superseded by CINCLANTFLT OPORD 43-62, issued October 20. From this point onward the President had decided to conduct

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[221] "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 58-85, 153-161.

a limited blockade and the OPORDs took on the character of mission orders rather than contingency plans. OPORD 43-62 was substantially revised to reflect additional Presidential guidance and re-issued as CINCLANTFLT OPORD 45-62 on October 21, 1962. This OPORD was used to conduct the quarantine, with minor revisions (primarily renaming the blockade a quarantine) issued on October 22 and 23. It was supplemented by Commander Second Fleet (COMSECONDFLT) OPORD 1-62, issued by Admiral Ward on October 22.[222]

Recollections vary as to how much the President and McNamara knew about the CINCLANT contingency plans prior to October. Admiral Dennison states in his oral history that "My plans were approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and, of course, were known to the President."[223] Most senior Navy officers involved in the crisis state McNamara undoubtedly was briefed on the contingency plans given his attention to detail. Vice Admiral Houser states that while Deputy Secretary of Defense Gilpatric probably was aware of the plans, he probably was not briefed on them "until it was needed," which would have been in early October. The same may also be true for McNamara and President Kennedy: they probably were aware of the contingency plans but not briefed on them in detail until early October. The civilian

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[222] Ibid, pp. 39, 103, 153.

[223] Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 416.

official who appears to have known the most about the plans was Robert Kennedy due to his being Chairman of the Cuba Coordinating Committee, which reviewed all plans and preparations for action against Cuba. Vice Admiral Blouin, Secretary to the Joint Chiefs immediately prior to the crisis, suggested that Robert Kennedy probably reviewed the contingency plans.[224]

What is clear, however, is that McNamara and the President paid close attention to the Cuban contingency plans after October 1, when McNamara directed the Chiefs to commence general preparations to execute them. On October 4 McNamara sent the President a memorandum primarily assessing the Soviet SAM sites in Cuba, but also responding to a Presidential inquiry as to the impact of the SAMs on the Cuban contingency plans. McNamara reassured the President that "I have taken steps to insure that our contingency plans for Cuba are kept up to date."[225] The Cuban contingency plans were discussed at length during the October 16 meetings with the President on the Soviet MRBMs discovered in Cuba. In those meetings McNamara demonstrates thorough knowledge of the plans and defends the Air Force

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[224] Houser, interview by author, February 11, 1988; Blouin, letter to author, March 1, 1988.

[225] Secretary of Defense, Memorandum for the President, "Presidential Interest in SA-2 Missile System and Contingency Planning for Cuba," October 4, 1962 (Declassified 1978. John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, MA, National Security Files, Cuba folders).

view that air strikes would have to cover a wide range of air defense targets rather than just the MRBM sites. By the October 27 EXCOMM meeting, when it appeared that air strikes and invasion might have to ordered in the next few days, even the President was able to discuss the contingency plans in great detail, including the number of sorties that would be required to execute OPLAN 312-62.[226]

A striking feature of President Kennedy's management of the crisis is his ordering imlementation of specific actions contained in the Cuban contingency plans <u>without</u> authorizing execution of the overall plans. The President was aware of the need to commence preparations for an invasion of Cuba, and during the first meeting of the crisis on October 16 directed that such preparations proceed.[227] However, he appears to have refused to actually execute the Cuban contingency plans--even the preparatory phases. Instead, the President approved specific invasion and air strike preparations individually, which required that operational commanders write separate orders for those actions, rather than simply implementing the guidance contained in the contingency plans. By October 16 the President should have known, given his attention to the

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[226] See "October 16 Morning Meeting Transcript," pp. 11-17, 21-26; "October 16 Evening Meeting Transcript," pp. ; 9-10, 17-23; "October 27 Meetings Transcript," pp. 52, 63-65, 74, 86-88.

[227] "October 16 Morning Meeting Transcript," p. 27

contingency planning, that just the preparatory phases of the two invasion plans could be executed so as to be prepared for invasion later.[228] Nevertheless, he refused to be bound by the timetables and courses of action in the two plans. He was not alone. Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Nitze has stated that he and Secretary of State Rusk agreed when they first heard about the Soviet missiles that "the United States must move with deliberation, not merely proceed with existing contingency plans."[229]

The President recalled the lessons from Barbara Tuchman's The Guns of August. He appears to have been deeply concerned that he would become trapped by execution of the contingency plans, just as Europe's leaders had been trapped by execution of their war plans in 1914. President Kennedy seemed to fear that execution of the preparatory phase of OPLAN 316-62 would build momentum and pressure to carry out the rest of the plan.

Rather than executing OPLAN 316-62, the President incrementally authorized specific preparatory actions

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[228] OPLAN 314-61 contained an option, designated "314 Golf," for execution of the invasion on four days notice--achieved by executing the plan, then halting it at D-4. OPLAN 316-62 consisted of four phases--alert, prepositioning and initial deployment, final deployment and pre-assault, and assault--and could be executed in phases. See "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 20-21, 87-89.

[229] Quoted in Abel, p. 33. Nitze's comments on his October 15 conversation with Rusk also shows that they knew about the air strike and invasion contingency plans.

contained in the plan. This is revealed by a comment in the CINCLANT report on the October 22 JCS order sending the Fifth Marine Expeditionary Brigade from Camp Pendleton to the Caribbean: "This step appeared to be another incremental execution of actions outlined in the Contingency Plan without execution of the plan itself."[230] The President would eventually authorize a wider range of preparations than were originally included in OPLAN 316-62, indicating that it was not his intent to constrain the ability of the military to carry out the plan if he so ordered. His objective was maintaining control of events.

Incremental authorization of the preparatory actions called for in OPLAN 316-62 does not appear to have seriously hindered the ability of the military to carry out those preparations. Serious logistical problems were encountered during the invasion preparations, particularly by the Army, but they were primarily the result of inadequate transportation resources. There were not sufficient numbers of transport planes, amphibious ships, or railroad cars to move all the men and equipment called for in the plan in the allotted time. The decks of one ship designated to carry the First Armored Division to Cuba were not far enough apart to carry tanks. Port, airfield, and rail capacity in the southeastern United States was saturated by the movement of

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[230] "CINCLANT Historical Account," p. 144.

forces into the area.[231] None of these problems were caused by the manner in which the President managed the crisis.

On the other hand, incremental authorization of the preparatory actions called for in OPLAN 316-62 and the decision to impose a quarantine on offensive arms rather than execute the existing contingency plan for a total blockade of Cuba were the causes of the overloading experienced by U.S. communications systems. As was discussed above, rather being able to send a short message stating "Execute OPLAN 312-62, OPLAN 316-62, and OPORD 41-62," JCS was forced to transmit detailed instructions for *ad hoc* actions authorized by the President. The most severe crisis management problem encountered during the crisis--overloading of communications channels--was thus generated by the manner in which the President elected to manage the crisis. The President's objective of maintaining control of events was sound, but the means he employed to pursue that objective degraded his ability to control events. This is an example of a tension between political and military considerations in crisis management, one that was not anticipated by the President or his civilian advisors.

Rules of engagement were used to exercise indirect control over certain military operations during the Cuban Missile Crisis, particularly quarantine force operations.

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[231] Ibid, pp. 58-85, 153-67.

For the most part, however, naval operations were governed by standing peacetime rules of engagement issued by JCS, CINCLANT, CINCLANTFLT, and Commander Anti-Submarine Warfare Force Atlantic (COMASWFORLANT). When special rules of engagement were issued, they generally reiterated the guidance contained in standing peacetime rules.[232]

The rules of engagement for the quarantine of Cuba were drafted by Captain Turner F. Caldwell of OPNAV (the CNO's staff). Captain Caldwell commenced working on detailed blockade procedures, including rules of engagement, on Friday, October 19, after McNamara directed the CNO to prepare plans for a limited blockade on offensive arms to Cuba. Captain Caldwell completed them the next day and the CNO presented them to McNamara that afternoon. The CNO briefed the President and his advisors on Navy plans for the quarantine on Sunday, October 21, and McNamara approved the final plans--including the rules of engagement--that evening. The JCS directive for the quarantine was issued on Monday, October 22. It included the rules of engagement drafted by Captain Caldwell, with virtually no changes.[233]

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[232] The one exception to this was protection of reconnaissance flights over Cuba. The right to use force in self defense was specifically denied to U.S. forces and the decision to use force was reserved for the President.

[233] "DOD Operations," pp. 2, 9; Caldwell, letters to author, March 14, 1988, and April 27, 1988. According to Vice Admiral Caldwell, the only change made to his rules for the quarantine was deletion of POL (petroleum, oil and lubricants) from the list of prohibited items.

Although not a part of the quarantine rules of engagement per se, use of force against merchant vessels was addressed in the intercept and boarding procedures issued by CINCLANTFLT:

> In stopping ships to be visited, use all/any available communications to signify intent, including such means as international code signals, flashing light, radio, or loud speakers. If these means fail, warning shots shall be fired across the bow, or, in the case of submarines, equivalent warning action. These means failing, minimum force may be used. Attempt, if possible, to damage only non-vital parts, such as the rudder, and attempt to avoid injuries or loss of life. . . . If destruction of ship is necessary, ample warning and intentions should be given to permit sufficient time for debarkation by passengers and crew. Assistance to maximum extent permitted by operational conditions should be furnished.[233]

This was essentially the same as guidance contained in Navy tactical publications. According to Vice Admiral Caldwell, "The chief difference was stress on caution. It was desired to accomplish the purpose with minimum use of force."[234] Thus, other than emphasizing caution, the quarantine guidance served only to reiterate standard Navy procedures

The rules of engagement for the quarantine issued by CINCLANTFLT, based on JCS guidance, were as follows:

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[233] Commander in Chief U.S. Atlantic Fleet, CINCLANTFLT 231710Z OCT 62, Revised OPORD 45-62, naval message, October 23, 1962 (Declassified 1986. Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington DC. Cited hereafter as CINCLANTFLT 231710Z OCT 62.). Also see Robert Kennedy pp. 60-61; Sorenson, p. 698; "Ships Must Stop," New York Times, October 23, 1962, p. 1; "Blockade Begins at 10 A.M. Today," New York Times, October 24, 1962, p. 1.

[234] Caldwell, letter to author, March 14, 1988.

> Any ships, including surface warships, armed merchant ships or submarines, or any aircraft, which interfere with or threaten to interfere with a U.S. ship engaged in visit and search will be treated as hostile and may be engaged to the extent required to terminate the interference. Any ships, including surface warships, armed merchant ships or submarines, or any aircraft, which take actions which can reasonably be considered as threatening a U.S. ship engaged in visit and search may be subjected to attack to the extent required to terminate the threat.[235]

These rules are not a change from standing peacetime naval rules of engagement, which always allow a ship to use force in self defense. The rules invoke the principle of anticipatory self defense upon detection of "actions which can reasonably be considered as threatening." This also is not different from peacetime rules of engagement: the Navy had adopted the principle of anticipatory self defense in 1958. The quarantine rules of engagement thus served to reiterate the guidance contained in standing peacetime rules.[236]

The basic guidance contained in the quarantine rules of engagement was revealed publicly by the Kennedy

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[235] CINCLANTFLT 231710Z OCT 62.

[236] Senior naval officers that participated in the crisis emphasized this point to the author. The CNO, the CNO's deputy for fleet operations, both of the attack carrier group commanders, and two ASW HUK group commanders all stated that the rules of engagement were basically similar to standing peacetime rules. Anderson, interview by author, January 25, 1988; Griffin, letter to author, April 6, 1988; Hayward, letter to author, February 17, 1988; Stroh, letter to author, February 18, 1988; Christiansen, interview by author, February 3, 1988; Admiral Noel A.M. Gayler, Commander Carrier Division Twenty (an ASW HUK group) during the crisis, letter to author, March 22, 1988. Several ship commanding officers made similar comments, and no one offered comments to the contrary.

Administration. The New York Times stated on October 24 that "The blockading ships can also use force if attacked."[237] The Quarantine Proclamation signed by the President on October 23 addressed the conditions under which force would be used against merchant ships: "In carrying out this order, force shall not be used except in case of failure or refusal to comply with directions, or with regulations or directives the Secretary of Defense issued hereunder, after reasonable efforts have been made to communicate them to the vessel or craft, or in case of self-defense. In any case force shall be used only to the extent necessary."[238] If the Soviets and Cubans paid attention to these statements, they were forewarned of the actions that would provoke use of force by the United States.

The interesting point about the quarantine rules of engagement is that they specifically authorized use of force against submarines in self-defense or anticipatory self-defense. Secretary of Defense McNamara and President Kennedy reviewed and approved the proposed rules of engagement drafted by Captain Caldwell before they were issued by the JCS on Monday, October 22, and therefore should have known that U.S. Navy ships had specifically been given such

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[237] "Blockade Begins at 10 A.M. Today," New York Times, October 24, 1962, p. 21.

[238] "The Soviet Threat to the Americas," Department of State Bulletin 47 (November 12, 1962): 717, reproduced in Larson, p. 77.

authority. It cannot be demonstrated conclusively that the President fully understood the implications of the quarantine rules of engagement. However, the fact that McNamara and the President authorized these rules strongly suggests that they appreciated the Navy's concern for the Soviet submarine threat and did not want to unnecessarily endanger Navy ships. This could well explain the President's concern that a clash with a Soviet submarine might be imminent on October 24.[239] He may have been concerned not only because he did not know what a Soviet submarine captain or a U.S. destroyer captain might do, but also because he knew that U.S. ships were authorized to use force against Soviet submarines in self-defense.

Rules of engagement were also issued for encounters with Cuban air and naval forces. The guidance promulgated by Commander Key West Force (COMKWESTFOR) to the forces operating near Cuba was that "Any ship or aircraft which attacks, or reasonably threatens to attack, a US flag ship will be treated as hostile and may be engaged to the extent required to terminate the threat."[240] Although these rules authorized use of force in anticipatory self-defense, Navy operational commanders emphasized caution and restraint in

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[239] Robert Kennedy, p. 70. Also see Sorenson, p. 705.

[240] CTG 81.6 261524Z OCT 62, OPORD 31-62 Change One, naval message, October 26, 1962 (Declassified 1986. Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington DC).

applying the rules. Captain Donald L. Lassell, Deputy Commander of the Key West Force and Commander of the Florida Strait Protection of Shipping Patrol, states that "my ships had orders to return fire if fired upon, but not to initiate an action without clearing it first with me. We had no intention of initiating hostilities."[241] This illustrates a tactical-level operational commander issuing guidance that is more restrictive than the guidance contained in rules of engagement issued by higher authority. Captain Lassell could do this effectively because he was near the scene of action and in direct communications with his ships.

Anticipatory self defense was authorized because Cuba had recently received Soviet-built Komar-class fast attack craft armed with SS-N-2 anti-ship cruise missiles. The Cuban Missile Crisis marked the first crisis in which U.S. naval forces had to cope with the threat of anti-ship cruise missiles. The rules of engagement issued by Commander Key West Force for the Komar missile boat threat stated "Permission is granted to immediately engage and destroy any Komar-class PGMG [guided missile fast patrol boat] which makes a hostile approach on U.S. naval forces or U.S. merchant ships."[242] Captain Robert E. Brady, Commanding

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[241] Lassell, letter to author, May 11, 1988.

[242] CTG 81.6 011603Z NOV 62, OPORD 33-62, naval message, November 1, 1962 (Declassified 1986. Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington DC).

Officer of USS John R. Perry (DE 1034), one of the ships on patrol in the Florida Strait during the crisis, states:

> The rules of engagement were basically those of self-preservation--fire if fired upon. The exception was that we were to fire if it became obvious that we were about to be fired upon. This was apparently a concession to the missile threat, but it was not really carte blanche, because we were in constant communication with COMKWESTFOR, and CINCLANT or CINCLANTFLT would jump in quickly if there was any hint of trouble.[243]

Thus, although U.S. Navy ships were authorized to use force in anticipatory self-defense due to the Cuban Komar threat, operational commanders closely monitored the tactical situation in order to maintain control over engagments.

It is not known if President Kennedy personally approved anticipatory self-defense against Cuban Komar missile boats. The principle of anticipatory self-defense had been approved by the JCS and the President in 1953 and adopted by the the Navy in 1958, so Navy commanders could authorize anticipatory self-defense on their own authority. The President would have had to specifically deny this option to the Navy. The President may have been briefed on the threat from Cuban Komars and the proposed rules of engagement for dealing with them--this would be consistent with the detailed briefings he received on other military operations--but it is also possible that the issue was never raised at his level.

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[243] Captain Robert E. Brady, letter to author, April 21, 1988.

U.S. Navy forces other than those under Commander Key West Force would have been governed by standing peacetime rules of engagement in an encounter with Cuban forces. Vice Admiral John T. Hayward, commander of the USS Enterprise (CVAN 65) attack carrier group during the crisis, provided comments illustrating how the peacetime rules functioned:

> They [the rules of engagement] were not significantly different [from peacetime rules], but I was prepared to engage any threat as I perceived it to the Task Force and instructed all hands to that effect. In that respect I guess they were different from the normal rules in existence at that time. My instructions from CINCLANTFLT, particularly Admiral Beakley, Chief of Staff, was to make sure no one had a chance to attack us. . . . I would have fired on any Cuban planes approaching the Task force and so instructed my people. For some reason people feel we did not have this authority. I can assure you we would have fired [on] and intercepted any plane inbound for the Task Force. One cannot afford to take any chances in such a situation. One must realize the speed of an engagement of that type and [that] one doesn't have a chance to do much but to make sure everyone in the Force knew not to hesitate or ask for any instructions on the matter. . . . The Komar patrol boats were the biggest danger at night and I couldn't let anyone get into missile range because of this. If a Komar had a Styx [SS-N-2] missile aboard, I certainly wasn't going to delay destoying it.[244]

Vice Admiral Hayward had ample authority under Navy peacetime rules of engagement to take all of the actions he describes. The primary difference from peacetime rules that he identifies is the emphasis on anticipatory self defense--firing before being fired on. Although this had been a part of Navy doctrine for four years, few Navy officers were

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[244] Hayward, letter to author, February 17, 1988.

familiar or experienced with the concept in 1962. Prior to that they had never been opposed by anti-ship cruise missiles. Vice Admiral Hayward's concern over the threat from Cuban Komar missile boats was typical of the concerns felt by Navy officers--concerns which generated the emphasis on anticipatory self defense.

As it had done with other aspects of the rules of engagement, the United States revealed the essence of its rules of engagement for Cuban forces. When asked during the background briefing he gave on October 22 if a Cuban attack on a U.S. ship would be considered an act of war, McNamara responded: "We will consider an attack by Cuban aircraft and/or ship against our aircraft or vessels warrants attack by us of the Cuban ship or aircraft. . . . The attack by a Cuban aircraft on one of our aircraft or on one of our ships warrants, I think, fire in return, directed to destroying that particular aircraft or ship."[245] Cuba was thus forewarned against attacking U.S. vessels.

In addition to reviewing and authorizing the rules of engagement for the quarantine, the Kennedy Administration also launched a study of the rules of engagement that would be appropriate should fighting erupt at sea. On October 23

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[230] Robert S. McNamara, "Background Briefing on Cuban Situation," October 22, 1962, transcript prepared by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, pp. 39-40 (National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file).

a Planning Subcommittee was formed to closely examine particular issues for the EXCOMM. One of the subjects of planning from October 24 onward was "rules of engagement for a protracted war at sea." The Department of Defense and JCS were tasked to study the issue, they in turn delegated the study to the Navy.[246] It is not clear what prompted this study other than apprehension that the Soviets might try to break the blockade, provoking fighting at sea. The key point is that the EXCOMM was trying to anticipate the rules of engagement that would be needed for expanded hostilities.

The rules of engagement over which the White House exercised the closest control were those for engaging Cuban air defenses. The basic question was in what manner U.S. forces would respond to Soviet SA-2 SAMs firing on high altitude photographic reconnaissance flights, or Cuban anti-aircraft guns or Mig fighters firing on low altitude photographic reconnaissance flights. The U-2s that flew the high altitude flights and the Navy F8U-1P Corsairs and Air Force RF-101 Voodoos that flew the low altitude flights were all unarmed. Their only defense was evasive maneuvering and, for the Corsairs and Voodoos, speed. The initial

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[246] See W.W. Rostow, Memorandum for McGeorge Bundy, "Report Number One of Planning Subcommittee," October 24, 1962 (Declassified 1975. National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file.); W.W. Rostow, Memorandum for McGeorge Bundy, "Report Number Two of the Planning Subcommittee," October 25, 1962 (Declassified 1975. National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file.).

policy decision was that military commanders would not be delegated authority to strike SAM or gun sites in Cuba that had fired on U.S. planes. On October 23 the President approved the following policy for retaliation against attacks on U-2 flights:

> The President will be informed through SAC/DOD channels, and it is expected that if there is clear indication that the incident is the result of hostile action, the recommendation will be for immediate retaliation upon the most likely surface-to-air site involved in the action. The President delegated authority for decision on this point to the Secretary of Defense under the following conditions:
>
> (1) that the President himself should be unavailable
>
> (2) that evidence of hostile Cuban action should be very clear[247]

The impact of this policy was to define strikes on Cuban air defenses as retaliation rather than self defense, and therefore beyond the scope of rules of engagement. It was, in effect, an order not to return fire when fired upon until the President, or at least the Secretary of Defense, ordered return fire. This policy was the most restrictive rules of engagement issued during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The issue of defending high and low level photographic reconnaissance flights became critical on October 27, when a Soviet SAM downed a U-2 and Cuban guns fired on Navy Corsairs (none were hit). Although both incidents clearly met the criteria for retaliation, the President decided not

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[247] "October 23 EXCOMM Minutes," pp. 1-2. Also see Sorenson, p. 713.

to authorize retaliation against Cuban air defenses. He and McNamara were clearly aware of the danger that this could result in more U.S. planes being shot down and more U.S. pilots being killed. The President's rationale in not ordering retaliation was to give Khrushchev an opportunity to respond to the letter the U.S. sent that day proposing a solution to the crisis.[248] If Khrushchev's response was not satisfactory and if there were further attacks on U.S. reconnaissance planes, the President probably would have ordered limited air strikes on Cuban air defenses.[249] In retrospect, the President's decision was a wise one--probably one of the most important of the entire crisis. Khrushchev did accept the offer in the President's letter and there were no further attacks on U.S. planes.

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[248] "October 27 Meetings Transcript," pp. 63-71. Also see Sorenson, p. 713.

[249] These retaliatory air strikes, rather than full-scale strikes against Soviet offensive missile sites, were probably the military action that Robert Kennedy had in mind when he told Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin on October 27 that "We had only a few more hours" and that the United States must have an answer by the next day. Robert Kennedy, pp. 108-9. The deadline is usually associated with his remark earlier in their conversation that "if they did not remove the bases we would remove them." However, if his account of the conversation is correct, he did not necessarily mean to imply that the United States would attack the offensive missile sites on Monday. Robert Kennedy had attended the EXCOMM meeting at which the President and McNamara had discussed retaliation against Cuban air defenses, so knew that this was imminent if there were further attacks on U.S. planes. Robert Kennedy also would have known that the President had not yet decided whether the next U.S. move would be a blockade of POL shipments to Cuba or full-scale air strikes against Soviet offensive missiles.

The manner in which rules of engagement were used in the crisis illustrates the command and control problems that arose from the Kennedy Administration's approach to maintaining close control over military operations. Rules of engagement are intended to serve as a mechanism of indirect control, providing on-scene commanders with decisionmaking guidance for situations in which direct control is not feasible. Issuing rules of engagement presupposes that military commanders have been delegated authority to make tactical decisions based on those rules. If the President or other high-level commanders do not wish to delegate certain operational decisions, that should be spelled out in the guidance issued to on-scene commanders. This was only done formally in the case of retaliatory strikes on Cuban air defenses. In every other area of operations, mechanisms of indirect control were used in parallel with direct control over telephone lines and HF/SSB voice radio.

Using mechanisms of indirect control in parallel with methods direct control was not novel. The military chain of command does this routinely when it delegates certain operational decisions to subordinates while retaining other decisions for superiors. When the military chain of command does this, however, it is careful to specify exactly what authority has been delegated and what has not. Senior commanders refrain from intervening in areas of operational decisionmaking delegated to subordinates except in emergencies. These principles avoid confusion over delegation of authority, but were not applied in the Cuban crisis.

On-scene commanders may have believed that they had authority that the President and McNamara did not intend to delegate to them. On the other hand, the President and McNamara may have believed that they had control over decisions that would not have been referred up the chain of command to them. Although the President and McNamara attempted to exercise direct control over certain naval operations, they still had to rely heavily on the prudence and judgement of on-scene commanders.

Naval Operations

The quarantine on shipments of offensive missiles to Cuba was the most important and visible naval operation conducted during the Cuban Missile Crisis, but it was far from being the only, or even the largest, naval operation of the crisis. Other operations conducted by the navy included anti-submarine warfare in the Atlantic and Caribbean, defense of Guantanamo Naval Base, low altitude photographic reconnaissance, surveillance and patrol around Cuba, preparations for air strikes against Cuba, preparations for amphibious invasion of Cuba, combined Latin America-United States quarantine force operations, air defense of the continental United States, and certain (still classified) special operations against Cuba. Of these various operations, only those that generated tactical-level interactions with Soviet vessels or submarines--the quarantine and anti-submarine warfare--will be discussed in detail.[250]

The option of blockading Cuba had been discussed within the Navy, JCS and Kennedy Administration for some time prior to the discovery of Soviet offensive missiles on October 14, 1962. After the Berlin Crisis in the fall of 1961, the President had directed the JCS to prepare contingency plans to blockade Cuba in retaliation for a Soviet blockade of Berlin--plans ranging from harassment

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[250] For details on the operations not discussed in this study, see the following: On preparations for air strikes against Cuba, Attack Carrier Force operations, and Air Force operations, see "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 110-19, 162-67; Robert S. McNamara, "Notes on October 21, 1962 Meeting with the President," (Declassified 1985. National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file); "Scenario for Airstrike Against Offensive Missile Bases and Bombers in Cuba," National Security Council, informal Cuba working group, final draft of internal memorandum, October 20, 1962 (Declassified 1985. National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file). On preparations for invasion of Cuba, Amphibious Force operations, and Army operations, see "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 58-85, 141-52, 153-61; Admiral Horacio Rivero, Jr., "The Reminiscences of Admiral Horacio Rivero, Jr., U.S. Navy (Retired)," (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, Oral History Program, 1975), pp. 411-447. On the reinforcement and defense of Guantanamo Naval Base, see "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 90-102, 153-61; "DOD Operations," pp. 9-11. On Combined Latin America-United States Quarantine Force (TF 137) operations, see "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 126-31; Commander Forrest R. Johns, "United We Stood," U.S. Naval Institute <u>Proceedings</u> 111 (January 1985): 78-84.

of shipping and flights to total blockade--a form of what is now called the "lateral escalation" strategy. As the military build-up on Cuba gained momentum in the summer of 1962, Navy planners on the CNO's staff and at CINCLANTFLT began preparing plans for a total blockade of Cuba that were not contingent on prior Soviet action against Berlin. A blockade was called for in OPLANs 314-61 and 316-62, but contingeny plans for it had not been prepared prior to the Cuban arms build-up. In late August Justice Department Counsel Norbert A. Schlei submitted a memorandum to the Attorney General suggesting that either a total blockade or a "visit and search" blockade, similar to that imposed by the United States on the eve of World War II, would be an appropriate response to Soviet introduction of offensive missiles in Cuba. On October 3 CINCLANTFLT issued a contingency plan (OPORD 41-62) for a total blockade of Cuba.[251] Thus, by early October the idea of a total or limited blockade of Cuba had been considered by civilian officials as well as by the military, and contingency plans existed for a total blockade of Cuba.

Given this prior consideration of plans to blockade Cuba, it is not surprising that blockading Cuba was discussed in the first meetings President Kennedy held with

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[251] Beakley, Naval War College Presentation, pp. 11-13; Caldwell, letter to author, March 14, 1988; Ward, "Diary," p. 1; Chayes, pp. 115-16; "CINCLANT Historical Account," p. 39.

his advisors on October 16 to discuss the the Soviet missiles in Cuba. Blockading Cuba was first mentioned by General Taylor that morning as an action to be taken in conjunction with air strikes against the Soviet missile sites.[252] In the afternoon meeting, McNamara proposed a "search and seizure" blockade as a separate option: "A second course of action we haven't discussed but lies in between the military course we began discussing a moment ago and the political course of action . . . would involve declaration of open surveillance; a statement that we would immediately impose . . . a blockade against offensive weapons entering Cuba in the future; . . ."[253]

Initially, there was little support for a limited blockade: most EXCOMM members and the JCS preferred the air strike option and believed that a limited blockade would not be sufficient to force Khrushchev to remove the missiles already in Cuba. On Thursday, October 18, opinion in the EXCOMM bagan shifting in favor of a limited blockade. On the morning of October 20, the EXCOMM slightly favored the blockade option over the air strike option, but the Joint Chiefs still advocated large-scale air strikes. The President made an initial decision in favor of the limited blockade option Saturday afternoon (October 20) and, after

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[252] "October 16 Morning Meeting Transcript," p. 12.

[253] "October 16 Evening Meeting Transcript," pp. 9, 46. Also see Robert Kennedy, pp. 33-34.

one last review of the air strike option with Air Force leaders Sunday morning, made a final decision to impose a search and seizure blockade on offensive arms to Cuba.[254]

Navy planning for a limited blockade of Cuba began Thursday evening, October 18, in response to a memorandum from Deputy Secretary of Defense Gilpatric to the JCS requesting information on the blockade option. Friday afternoon, 19 October, the JCS met with Gilpatric with the answers to his questions and designated Admiral Anderson its executive agent for CINCLANT operations against Cuba. That evening Secretary of Defense McNamara directed the CNO to prepare plans for a limited blockade on offensive arms to Cuba. The operational planning was delegated to Admiral Dennison and his staff in Norfolk, but certain policy issues, such as detailed intercept and boarding procedures and the rules of engagement, were handled by the CNO's staff. Saturday morning, October 20, McNamara directed the CNO to prepare "position and policy papers, scenario, and implementing instructions" for a limited blockade. Saturday

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[254] On the advantages and disadvantages of the blockade option and the considerations that led to its adoption, see "October 16 Morning Meeting Transcript," pp. 13-14; "October 16 Evening Meeting Transcript," p. 48; SNIE 11-19-62, pp. 4-6, Annex A; SNIE 11-20-62, pp. 6-7; Robert S. McNamara, "Notes on October 21, 1962 Meeting with the President," (Declassified 1985. National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file); Robert Kennedy, pp. 33-39, 43-49; Hilsman, pp. 203, 206; Sorenson, pp. 682-92; Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, pp. 803-8. Also see George, "Cuban Missile Crisis," pp. 95-100; Abel, pp. 60-73, 79-82, 86-101; Pachter, pp. 15, 27.

afternoon Admiral Dennison and Vice Admiral Ward prepared a plan for blockade operations. The CNO, assisted by Admiral Dennison and Vice Admiral Ward, presented the detailed Navy plans for the blockade to McNamara and the JCS. McNamara and General Taylor took the plans to the White House for the Saturday afternoon meeting in which the President initially approved the limited blockade option. The CNO briefed the President and his advisors on Navy plans for the limited blockade on Sunday, October 21, and McNamara approved the final plans that evening. The only major change made in the Navy's plan for the limited blockade was to delete POL (petroleum, oil and lubricants) from the list of prohibited items. The JCS directive for the limited blockade was issued on Monday morning, October 22.[255]

The Blockade Force, Task Force 136 (TF 136), was commanded by Vice Admiral Ward, embarked in USS Newport News (CA 148). TF 136 was divided into three Task Groups. The Surface Group (TG 136.1) was commanded by Rear Admiral John W. Ailes, III, Commander Cruiser Destroyer Flotilla Six, embarked in the guided missile cruiser USS Canberra (CAG 2). TG 136.1 consisted of two cruisers escorted by four destroyers, and twelve destroyers on the quarantine line. The ASW Group (TG 136.2) was commanded by Rear Admiral

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[255] "DOD Operations," pp. 2, 9; Caldwell, letter to author, April 27, 1988; Ward, "Diary," pp. 4-5; Ward, "Reminiscences," pp. 189-91; Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 422; Sorenson, pp. 692, 698; Abel, pp. 81-82, 107, 141-43.

Ernest E. Christiansen, Commander Carrier Division Eighteen, embarked in USS Essex (CVS 9). TG 136.2 originally consisted of USS Essex and six escorting destroyers. The Underway Replenishment Group (TG 136.3) was commanded by Captain W.O. Spears, Commanding Officer of USS Elokomin (AO 55), and consisted of three oilers and an ammunition ship, with four destroyers as escorts. As the quarantine progressed, other units relieved these ships so that they could be rotated into port for repairs and crew rest. As a result, a total of 62 ships eventually served in TF 136.[256]

In addition TF 136, Task Force 81 and Task Force 83, both under the command of Vice Admiral Edmund B. Taylor, Commander Anti-Submarine Warfare Force Atlantic, participated in the search for Soviet bloc ships en route to Cuba. The portion of Task Force 81 that participated in the quarantine consisted of twelve land-based patrol plane squadrons, about 140 aircraft (primarily P2Vs and P5Ms, but with some brand new P3Vs). Task Force 83 consisted of three ASW HUK Groups (three ASW carriers, about 120 planes and helicopters, and 20 destroyers) and approximately 24 destroyers and destroyer escorts in Atlantic and Caribbean picket stations.[257] Although the primary function of TF 81

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[256] "CINCLANT Historical Account," p. 103; Ward, "Diary," pp. 9-10.

[257] "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 120-25. Air Force RB-47 and RB-50 reconnaissance planes flying out of the Bahamas also participated in ocean surveillance.

and TF 83 was ASW, they played vital role in locating and tracking Soviet bloc shipping.

Some of the ships that would comprise TF 136 began leaving port over the weekend of October 20-21, some having to depart with only part of their crews on board due to the secrecy of the operation. This provided enough ships on station as of Monday, October 22, to guard the shipping lanes to Cuba. Most of the quarantine force ships left port on Monday, arriving on station by Wednesday morning (October 24) when the quarantine went into effect. The initial quarantine line was designated "Walnut" and was established on an arc 500 nautical miles from Cape Maisi, at the eastern tip of Cuba. Table 3 lists the initial twelve stations in

Table 3
Quarantine Line Walnut

Station *Number*	Latitude *(North)*	Longitude *(West)*	Ship Assigned (Initially)
1	19-00	65-10	USS F.B. Royal (DD 872)
2	20-00	65-00	USS McDonough (DLG 8)
3	21-00	65-10	USS Dewey (DLG 14)
4	22-00	65-20	USS Steinaker (DDR 863)
5	23-00	65-40	USS J.R. Pierce (DD 753)
6	23-50	66-00	USS Leary (DDR 879)
7	24-50	67-20	USS Bigelow (DD 942)
8	25-40	67-20	USS McCaffrey (DD 860)
9	26-30	68-10	USS Sellers (DDG 11)
10	27-10	69-06	USS W.C. Lawe (DD 763)
11	27-40	70-06	USS Witek (EDD 842)
12	28-00	70-50	USS Gearing (DD 710)

Source: "CNO Historical Narrative," pp. 44-46.

quarantine line Walnut. The two cruisers operated independently of the quarantine line: USS <u>Newport News</u>, escorted by USS <u>Keith</u> (DD 775) and USS <u>Lawrence</u> (DDG 4), near the south end of the line (northeast of Puerto Rico), and USS <u>Canberra</u>, escorted by USS <u>Borie</u> (DD 704) and USS <u>Soley</u> (DD 707), near the north end of the line (northeast of Nassau). The USS <u>Essex</u> HUK group operated west of the center of the quarantine line.[258]

A controversy has persisted over exactly where the quarantine line was established and whether or not it was moved closer to Cuba on October 23-24. The evidence now available establishes conclusively that the quarantine line was established on October 24 on an arc 500 nautical miles from Cape Maisi and was not moved closer to Cuba until October 30.[259] Robert Kennedy and others who recall the quarantine line as initially having been established at 800 nautical miles are mistaken.[260]

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[258] Ward, "Diary," p. 10; "CINCLANT Historical Account," p. 103; "DOD Operations," p. 3. Also see Anderson, "Reminiscences," pp. 546-47.

[259] JCS message, JCS 250833Z OCT 62, no. 6968, "Situation Report 3-62 as of 250400Z October 1962, Opertion Scabbards," p. 3 (Declassified 1988. Provided to author by Scott Sagan); "CNO Historical Narrative," pp. 44-46; "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 103-4; Ward, "Diary," pp. 10, 15.

[260] Robert Kennedy, p. 67; Dan Caldwell, "A Research Note on the Quarantine of Cuba, October 1962," <u>International Studies Quarterly</u> 22 (December 1978): 625-33. Caldwell made three errors in his analysis. First, only five of the eleven ships he examined were assigned stations on the

The 500 nautical mile distance from Cuba was decided upon by October 20 and implemented October 24. The rationale for placing the blockade line that far out was to keen Navy ships outside the range of Cuban aircraft.[261] McNamara probably accepted a CNO or JCS recommendation to set the blockade line at 500 nautical miles the evening of October 19 or the morning of October 20. Admiral Ward states that the 500 nautical mile distance had already been decided upon by 11:00 A.M. on October 20, when he was first briefed on the blockade by CINCLANT. Admiral Ward and Admiral Dennison drew up their blockade plan based on the 500 nautical mile distance and presented it to the JCS. The blockade line distance was discussed at length during the evening October 20 JCS meeting. According to Admiral Ward, Admiral Anderson agreed that Cuban forces were not a serious threat outside of about 180 nautical miles and that the blockade line could be moved closer to Cuba.[262] Admiral Ward states that the

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quarantine line. The others were operating independently of the quarantine line and one (USS Randolph) was not even in TF 136. Second, ship's locations prior to about 9:00 A.M. on October 24 are irrelevant because the ships were still en route to their stations from U.S. ports. Third, the positions from October 24 onward are suspect because quarantine line ships were routinely out of station for refueling, trailing Soviet ships, and other tasking. Quarantine line ships were not prohibited from going beyond 500 miles for these purposes. For a more detailed analysis, see Johns, "Naval Quarantine," pp. 107-115.

[261] Ward, "Diary," pp. 4-6; Anderson, "Reminiscences," p. 546; Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 424.

[262] Ward, "Diary," pp. 4-6. Also see Abel, p. 123.

October 22 JCS directive for the blockade did not contain the 500 nautical miles requirement, but that CINCLANTFLT OPORD 45-62 for the quarantine of Cuba, promulgated October 21, retained the requirement that the blockade line be set at 500 nautical miles. Therefore, he decided on October 23, with CINCLANTFLT concurrence, to set the blockade line at 500 nautical miles.[263]

Robert Kennedy recounts in his memoir of the crisis that on the evening of October 23 President Kennedy directed McNamara to move the quarantine line closer to Cuba in order to give the Soviets more time to react before the first ships were intercepted. Robert Kennedy's account is erroneous in that he states the quarantine line was ordered moved in from 800 nautical miles to 500 nautical miles.[264] Graham T. Allison, establishing correctly that the quarantine line was set at 500 nautical miles from Cuba at least through October 25, contends that "the blockade was <u>not</u> moved as the President ordered."[265] Allison goes on to conclude, incorrectly, that "It seems probable, then, that the Navy's resistance to the President's order that the blockade be drawn in closer to Cuba forced the President to

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[263] Ward, "Diary," pp. 6, 9.

[264] Robert Kennedy, p. 67. Also see Schlesinger, <u>A Thousand Days</u>, p. 818.

[265] Graham T. Allison, <u>Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis</u> (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971), pp. 129-30.

allow one or several Soviet ships to pass through the blockade after it was officially operative."[266] Allison portrays this incident as an example of the organizational process model constraining the President's ability to effectively control crisis military operations.[267]

Attention must focus on exactly what the President said to McNamara concerning the quarantine line on the evening of October 23. The first possibility is that the President gave McNamara a clear and specific order to immediately move the quarantine line closer to Cuba, as recounted by Robert Kennedy, but the CNO refused to carry out the order. It is inconceivable, however, that McNamara or the President would have tolerated such insubordination.

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[266] Ibid. Allison incorrectly contends that the Soviet tanker Vinnitsa and other Soviet ships were allowed through the quarantine line. However, the daily CIA report for October 25 states "Thus far no Soviet ships have entered the zone since it was established. Only two Soviet ships--one a tanker--have arrived in Cuba since 23 October and both of these were well within the zone prior to its establishment." Central Intelligence Agency, Memorandum, "The Crisis USSR/Cuba, Information as of 0600," October 25, 1962, p. II-1 (Declassified. National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file. Cited hereafter as CIA, "Crisis USSR/Cuba," October 25, 1962).

[267] Allison does not claim the President was unaware of the quarantine line not having been moved. The positions of the Navy ships were plotted on the charts in the White House Situation Room and closely monitored by the President. See Sorenson, p. 710. Additionally, McNamara visited Flag Plot at least once a day, sometimes morning and evening, for briefings on Navy operations and Soviet shipping. Charts in Flag Plot showed the locations of all Navy ships involved in Cuban operations. There is thus no possibility that the Navy could have covertly left the quarantine line at 500 nautical miles after having been ordered to move it in.

Admiral Anderson denies that there was any insubordination: "Certainly there was no disregard of the President's directives. After all, he is the commander in chief."[268] According to Admiral Ward the CNO was willing to consider moving the quarantine line closer to Cuba on October 20, making it unlikely that Admiral Anderson would have defied the President three days later.[269] It is thus highly unlikely that the CNO simply refused to carry out a clear and specific Presidential order to immediately move the quarantine line closer to Cuba

The second possibility is that the President erroneously thought that the quarantine line was set at 800 nautical miles, called the Secretary of Defense to move it in, and was reminded by McNamara that it was set at 500 nautical miles.[270] The strength of this explanation is that it accounts for Robert Kennedy's recollection that the quarantine line was originally set at 800 nautical miles.[271]

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[268] Admiral George W. Anderson, Jr., "The Cuban Blockade: An Admiral's Memoir," The Washington Quarterly, Autumn 1982, p. 86. Vice Admiral Houser, Naval Assistant to Roswell Gilpatric during the crisis, states "I know of no instances of the Navy deliberately disobeying an order." Houser, interview by author, February 11, 1988.

[269] Ward, "Diary," p. 6.

[270] Johns, "Naval Quarantine," p. 113.

[271] Other participants in the crisis, notably General Taylor and Arthur Schlesinger, also recall the quarantine line as originally having been set at 800 nautical miles. See Dan Caldwell, "Research Note," pp. 628-29.

Admiral Anderson recalls discussing the quarantine line distance with McNamara the evening of October 23.[272] Thus, McNamara may have checked with the CNO to verify his facts before reminding the President of where the quarantine line was actually located.

The weakness in this scenario is trying to establish how the President came to think that the quarantine line was set at 800 nautical miles. The most likely source would have been a briefing prior to October 19 on the original contingency plan for a total blockade of Cuba, CINCLANTFLT OPORD 41-62, which had been issued October 3. Although unlikely, this OPORD may have specified a blockade line distance of 800 nautical miles.[273] However, the plan that was actually used, CINCLANTFLT OPORD 45-62, issued October 21, specified a 500 nautical mile distance, and the President was briefed on this plan by the CNO Sunday afternoon. The President is thus unlikely to have thought that the quarantine line was set at 800 nautical miles.

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[272] Anderson, interview by author, January 25, 1988.

[273] The author was unable to locate CINCLANTFLT OPORD 41-62 in Navy archives. However, OPORD 41-62 probably would not have specified a distance as great as 800 nautical miles from Cuba, which would have put the blockade ships in the mid-Atlantic. That would have greatly complicated Navy logistics, particularly refueling the ships, and required a greater number of ships to cover a larger ocean area. Furthermore, the OPORD actually used for the quarantine (OPORD 45-62) was derived from OPORD 41-62 and specified only a 500 nautical mile distance, which suggests that OPORD 41-62 originally specified the same distance.

The third possibility is that the President talked to McNamara about moving the quarantine line in from 500 nautical miles to 300 nautical miles, but then was persuaded to leave it at 500 nautical miles. However, there are grounds for suspecting that Robert Kennedy was wrong when he stated that the President gave an order to move the quarantine line in. Given that he erred on the distance of the quarantine line, Robert Kennedy also may not have understood exactly what the President wanted done with the quarantine line. Robert Kennedy made similar errors concerning other orders the President allegedly gave.[274] The President may not have given McNamara an order, but rather a suggestion that the quarantine line be moved in or a request that McNamara investigate the feasibility of moving it in.[275]

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[274] Robert Kennedy erroneously claims elsewhere in his memoir of the crisis that the President gave an order when he had not. Robert Kennedy states that the President gave an order for the Jupiter missiles in Turkey to be removed. See Robert Kennedy, pp. 94-95. In fact, however, the President had only directed that the issue be studied. See The White House, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, National Security Action Memorandum No. 181, August 23, 1962 (Declassified 1978. John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, MA, National Security Files, Box 338, "Cuba (4). 8/23/64" folder). Also see Donald L. Hafner, "Bureaucratic Politics and 'Those Frigging Missiles': JFK, Cuba and U.S. Missiles in Turkey," Orbis 21 (Summer 1977): 307-33; Barton J. Bernstein,. "The Cuban Missile Crisis: Trading the Jupiters in Turkey?" Political Science Quarterly 95 (Spring 1980): 102-104. There are thus grounds for suspecting that Robert Kennedy misinterpreted a Presidential request or suggestion as an order.

[275] Vice Admiral Houser suggested this to the author. Houser, interview by author, February 11, 1988.

Furthermore, Admiral Anderson states that he did not attempt to persuade McNamara or the President to leave the quarantine line at 500 nautical miles.[276] Thus, whatever the President passed to McNamara probably was not an order to move the quarantine line closer to Cuba. The President probably requested that McNamara find some way of delaying the initial boardings of Soviet ships--perhaps suggesting that moving the quarantine line as a way of doing it.

This raises the fourth possible explanation: President Kennedy did not specifically order the quarantine line moved in, but directed McNamara to delay the initial boardings of Soviet ships and suggested that moving the quarantine line closer to Cuba would be a means of achieving that objective. McNamara consulted with the CNO, who recommended that the quarantine line be left at 500 nautical miles until the extent of the threat from cuban aircraft could be determined.[277] McNamara concurred with this recommendation, specifying that no Soviet bloc ships were to be boarded until they reached the 500 nautical mile arc, and the Pesident approved this plan. This is the most likely explanation for what transpired the evening of October 23.

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[276] Anderson, interview by author, January 25, 1988.

[277] Admiral Dennison states that the quarantine line was moved closer to Cuba after it was determined that there was little threat from cuban planes. See Dennison, "Reminiscences," pp. 424-26. Also see "CINCLANT Historical Account," p. 104; anerson, "Reminiscences," p. 546.

The key to this explanation is that the ships on the quarantine line were authorized to intercept Soviet ships outside the 500 mile arc on which their stations were established. Initially, that was the only significance of the 500 nautical mile arc: it imposed no restriciton whatsoever on the movements of the quarantine ships.[278] Scott D. Sagan suggests that the President was aware that Admiral Ward had authority to intercept ships outside the 500 nautical mile arc. Sagan concludes that "The result of Kennedy's order thus appears to have been only to ensure that the quarantine line was set at the point where it had originally been planned."[279] Sagan is correct that Admiral Ward originally was not restricted to intercepting ships when they reached the 500 nautical mile arc. CINCLANTFLT OPORD 45-62 and COMSECONDFLT OPORD 1-62 did not specify the range at which ships were to be intercepted. Admiral Dennison states that "the line wasn't necessarily static. We didn't just sit there. We knew where these ships were

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[277] Dennison, "Reminiscences," pp. 424-25. Also see "CINCLANT Historical Account," p. 104; Anderson, "Reminiscences," p. 546.

[278] In his October 22 background briefing, McNamara stated that there was not a boundary line drawn where the Navy would start patrolling in the Atlantic, which suggests that intercepts could occur outside the quarantine line. McNamara, "Background Briefing on the Cuban Situation," p. 19.

[279] Scott D. Sagan, "Nuclear Alerts and Crisis Management," International Security 9 (Spring 1985): 110.

and went out to intercept them."[280] Thus, President Kennedy had reason to belive that Soviet ships might be boarded well beyond the 500 nautical mile arc. This probably would have happended if he had not directed McNamara to delay the first boardings.

The one modification that must be made to Sagan's interpretation is to draw a distinction intercept and boarding. To the Navy, intercepting the Soviet ships meant coming close enough to positively identify them visually (depending on weather conditions, that could be anywhere from one to five miles), then trailing them visually or on radar (radar trailing kept the U.S. ship discretely out of sight over the horizon). When so specified by COMSECONDFLT, intercept also included hailing the Soviet ship and asking its cargo and destination. The key point is that intercept did not mean boarding. This was probably unclear to the President when he called McNamara the evening of October 23. McNamara appears not to have issued an order not to intercept Soviet ships outside the 500 nautical mile arc.[281]

The orders that probably were given allowed Soviet ships to be intercepted and trailed outside quarantine line,

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[280] Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 426. Sorenson notes that "The Navy was eager to go far out into the ocean to intercept the key Soviet ships." Sorenson, p. 710.

[281] Admiral Anderson states no such order was given. Anderson, interview by author, January 25, 1988. None of the many Navy officers contacted by the author could recall such an order.

but specified that Soviet ships were not to be stopped and boarded until they reached the 500 nautical mile arc. If this had been Admiral Ward's intention to begin with, no further orders would have been required. This explanation supports Sagan's interpretation of the overall effect of the President's October 23 order. It also complements the previous explanation--that the President approved a CNO recommendation not to move the quarantine line in until the Cuban air threat could be assessed. Given the President's concern with avoiding incidents with Soviet and Cuban forces, he was probably responsive to arguments for keeping the quarantine ships away from Cuba. Thus, the President may well have suggested to McNamara that the quarantine line be moved closer to Cuba, but then agreed that it would be better simply to not stop and board ships outside the 500 nautical mile arc. This met the President's objective of providing Khrushchev more time to react and the CNO's objective of keeping the quarantine ships beyond the range of Cuban planes.

The Navy had mounted intensive surveillance of Soviet bloc shipping to Cuba since early August. When the President announced the quarantine on October 22, the Navy already had a complete list of the Soviet bloc ships en route to Cuba, including those suspected of carrying offensive missiles. The Soviet bloc ships were being tracked by the Navy's Univac Sea Surveillance Computer

System, which projected their positions based on their last known course and speed. On October 23 there were tenty-five Soviet and two other Soviet bloc ships en route to Cuba, including nineteen Soviet freighters (dry cargo ships) and six Soviet tankers. Of the nineteen Soviet freighters, three (Okhotsk, Orenburg, and Poltava) were large hatch ships suspected of carrying offensive missiles, two were carrying suspected missiles or missile-related equipment on deck, and eleven others were suspected of carrying other military equipment (for a total of sixteen freighters suspected of carrying military cargoes). Additionally, there were eighteen Soviet bloc ships in Cuban ports when the quarantine was announced.[282]

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[282] Of the nineteen Soviet freighters en route to Cuba when the quarantine was announced, all sixteen suspected of carrying military cargoes turned back, and the other three proceeded on to Cuba. The Soviet freighter Leninsky Komsomol, carrying IL-28 bombers, arrived in Cuba October 24. It was one of the two Soviet ships, along with the tanker Vinnitsa, that was well inside the quarantine line when it went into effect. The Soviet freighter Belovodsk stopped, transferred probable military cargo at night to a ship returning to the Soviet Union, then proceeded on to Cuba. The Soviet freighter Emelyan Pugachev, in the Pacific when the quarantine was announced, was boarded and searched by a U.S. Navy officer as it transited the Panama Canal on November 3 and allowed to proceeded to Cuba. This was not a quarantine inspection *per se*, but the standard inspection of all Soviet ships that transit the canal. CIA, Memorandum, "Soviet Bloc Shipping To Cuba," October 23, 1962, p. 1 (Declassified. National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file); CIA, Memorandum, "The Crisis USSR/Cuba," October 24, 1962, pp. II-1, II-2 (Declassified. National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file); CIA, "Crisis USSR/Cuba," October 25, 1962, p. II-1; CIA, Memorandum, "The Crisis USSR/Cuba, Information as

U.S. Navy ships on the quarantine line were at the highest condition of readiness they could sustain for an extended period, with at least half of their crews at battle stations and weapons manned and ready. Navy patrol planes searching for Soviet ships were armed with five-inch rockets and ASW torpedoes. Although CINCLANT had made an effort to provide Russian language interpreters for all the ships on the quarantine line, not every ship had one.[283] As dawn broke on Wednesday morning, October 24, the Navy ships moved into position to halt the flow of offensive arms to Cuba.

The basic operational procedures for the quarantine were specified in CINCLANTFLT OPORD 45-62. The following excerpts from OPORD 45-62 were the central guidance for intercept and boarding of ships:

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of 0600," October 26, 1962, pp. I-1, II-1 (Declassified. National Security Archive, Washington, DC, Cuban Missile Crisis file); "CINCLANT Historical Account," p. 12; Ward, "Diary," p. 9.

[283] On the readiness of the ships, see Ward, "Reminiscences," p. 198. On patrol plane weapons, see Captain Sidney Edelman, Commanding Officer of VP-24, letter to author, March 25, 1988. Two Commanding Officers of ships on the quarantine line stated they did not have interpreters embarked. Dickey, letter to author, April 20, 1988; Foust, letter to author, March 10, 1988. The Commanding Officer of USS Canberra (CAG 2) stated that seven Russian interpreters reported aboard his ship on October 22 for distribution to the rest of the quarantine force. Captain Robert K. Irvine, letter to author, April 6, 1988. Since Canberra was the only ship in the quarantine force with helicopters for transferring personnel (other than USS Essex, at sea off Guantanamo), there is reason to believe that these seven interpreters were the only ones available for the nineteen ships that could have been tasked to board a Soviet ship the first day of the quarantine.

All ships, including combatant, surface and subsurface, Soviet and non-Soviet, designated by CINCLANTFLT on [the] basis of available information will be intercepted. Ships not so designated are not to be interfered with. If CINCLANTFLT believes the intercepted ship may be carrying prohibited material to Cuba, CINCLANTFLT will order a visit and search to be made to verify the belief. . . .

Ships which after being intercepted signal their intention to proceed to non-Cuban ports may be released without visit or search. The Commander of the intercepting ship may prescribe courses for the intercepted ship to follow. Surveillance will be maintained over such intercepted ships. Any ship which fails to proceed as elected or directed, or which attempts to proceed to a Cuban port, will be stopped and boarded. If a satisfactory explanation is not forthcoming, the ship will be diverted to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, or to a port designated by CINCLANTFLT.

Any ship which is determined by the Commander of the intercepting ship to be carrying no prohibited material shall be permitted to proceed to Cuba.

Visit and search of a stopped ship shall consist of examining the manifest and inspecting the cargo. In the event visit is refused, the ship may be taken into custody. A boarding party shall be placed on board. Forceful boarding and control of the ship's operation may be necessary. If boarding meets with organized resistance, the ship will be destroyed.

Ships believed to be carrying prohibited material shall be directed to proceed to such non-Cuban port as her owners or master may elect. The commander of the intercepting ship may designate courses to be followed. Surveillance shall be maintained over the intercepted ships. Any ship which fails to proceed to a non-Cuban port will be handled IAW para 2 above.

If a ship is visited but search is refused, the Commander of the intercepting ship will take the intercepted ship into custody if he has reasonable grounds for suspecting that it is carrying prohibited material. It will be diverted to a U.S. port for disposition.[284]

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[284] CINCLANTFLT 231710Z OCT 62.

The first Soviet ships were to be stopped and boarded as soon as the quarantine went into effect at 10:00 a.m. Wednesday, October 24. USS Essex was assigned to stop and board Gagarin, a suspected arms carrier. USS Newport News and her escorts were assigned to intercept Poltava, a large hatch ship suspected of carrying missiles. Kimovsk, another suspected arms carrier, was also targeted for intercept and boarding. CINCLANT had recommended, and the White House had approved, that these ships be boarded because they would be the first suspected arms carriers to reach the quarantine line. But the three Soviet ships did not reach the quarantine line at their estimated arrival times and as of early afternoon none of them had been intercepted.[285]

As of Tuesday, October 23, nine Soviet merchant ships had been close enough to the quarantine line that they might

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[285] "CINCLANT Historical Account," p. 105; Ward, "Diary," pp. 10-11; Christiansen, interview by author, February 3, 1988. Robert Kennedy's account of the situation at sea that Wednesday morning is erroneous. See Robert Kennedy, p. 69. There was no Soviet ship named Komiles, he is probably referring to Kimovsk. Rear Admiral Christiansen has stated USS Essex was not informed of or tasked to prosecute any Soviet submarines in the vicinity of Gagarin. Interest-ingly, the quarantine ships were told when to stop and board the Soviet ships (at 10:00 A.M.), not where to stop and board them (at the 500 nautical mile arc). The President apparently knew that the first Soviet ships were to be boarded as soon as the quarantine went into effect Wednesday morning--he had, in fact, personally authorized the initial boardings. Presumably, Navy calculations showed that Kimovsk and Gagarin would reach the 500 nautical mile arc by 10:00 A.M. Wednesday. However, this cannot be proven because the two Soviet ships turned back well before they were intercepted.

have been stopped and boarded the first day of the quarantine. By Wednesday morning, however, all of the Soviet ships en route to Cuba, including tankers and freighters carrying non-military cargoes, had already either stopped or turned back. Moscow had HF radio links with its merchant fleet and used them to control the ships en route to Cuba. There appears to have been a pattern to the movements of the Soviet ships. All of the freighters that the U.S. suspected of carrying weapons or equipment on the prohibited list were ordered to immediately reverse course and return to the Soviet Union. According to the October 25 daily CIA report, "The course changes of those ships which have turned back were executed around noon EDT [Eastern Daylight Time] on 23 October. . . . The ships turned around well before President Kennedy signed the proclamation establishing a quarantine zone around Cuba."[286] The Soviets had thus made a decision not to challenge the quarantine even while publicly declaring their refusal to recognize it. Soviet ships

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[286] CIA, "Crisis USSR/Cuba," October 25, 1962, p. II-1. The Welch and Blight interpretation of the Soviet decision not to challenge the quarantine is misleading in this regard. They claim that it was U.N. Secretary General U Thant's October 25 public request that Khrushchev keep his ships clear of the quarantine area that provided the Soviet leader with "a face-saving way of ordering his ships to stop short of the quarantine line." Welch and Blight, p. 9. It is clear, however, that by October 23--two days before U Thant's request--Khrushchev had already ordered his ships not to enter the quarantine zone. Thus, what U Thant's request provided was a face-saving way for Khrushchev to <u>publicly acknowledge</u> that he would not challenge the quarantine--not an insignificant contribution.

suspected of carrying military cargo other than offensive weapons initially halted, apparently awaiting further instructions, then turned back as Moscow decided not to let any military cargo be inspected by the Americans. Soviet ships carrying non-military cargo, including tankers, initially halted--some of them sitting motionless for two days--then proceeded on to Cuba.[287] This delay resulted in no Soviet ships passing through the quarantine line until October 25.

Late Tuesday and early Wednesday the United States began receiving indications that Soviet shipping to Cuba had been ordered to halt. By mid-morning Wednesday the information was solid enough to pass on to the President. He received the report at about 10:00 a.m. during an EXCOMM meeting. Initial estimates of how many Soviet ships had halted or turned back varied widely. During the day Navy and Air Force reconnaissance planes were able to verify that the Soviet ships had halted or turned back. By midafternoon the President could clearly see that Khrushchev was not going to challenge the quarantine.[288]

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[287] Admiral Dennison observed that "this demonstrates pretty good control by the Soviets, that they could get through to these merchant ships and with not very much time elapsed either." Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 427.

[288] "October 24 Morning EXCOMM Meeting Record of Action," p. 1; CIA, "Crisis USSR/Cuba," October 25, 1962, p. II-1; Robert Kennedy, p. 71; Ward, "Diary," p. 11; Sorenson, pp. 710-11.

When the President received the initial report that the Soviet ships appeared to have halted, he ordered that no Soviet ships were to be boarded for at least an hour while further information on their movements was collected.[289] Later, when it was confirmed that the Soviet ships had halted or turned back, the order went out to the quarantine force: "Do not stop and board. Keep under surveillance. Make continuous reports."[290] This marked a significant change in the manner the White House controlled the quarantine. Prior to midday Wednesday, the President had approved a list of ships to be boarded, specified when the boardings would commence (10:00 a.m. Wednesday), and waited for the boardings to take place. From midday Wednesday onward, the White House closely controlled which ships were to be stopped and boarded. Lengthy discussions were held on the merits and dangers of boarding every Soviet bloc ship that approached the quarantine line. Navy commanders were not permitted to order a ship of any nationality boarded on their own authority.[291]

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[289] "October 24 Morning EXCOMM Meeting Record of Action," p. 1.

[290] Ward, "Diary," p. 11. Also see Anderson, "Cuban Crisis," p. 84; Robert Kennedy, pp. 71-72.

[291] Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 426; Ward, "Reminiscences," p. 200; Christiansen, interview by author, February 3, 1988; Wissman, letter to author, March 4, 1988; Irvine, letter to author, April 6, 1988; Foust, letter to author, March 10, 1988; Dickey, letter to author, April 20, 1988.

A misconception has arisen in the literature on the Cuban Missile Crisis concerning the manner in which the quarantine was controlled. Allison, for example, claims that the White House circumvented the chain of command and that "local commanders received repeated orders about the details of their military operations directly from political leaders."[292] This greatly exaggerates the degree of control exercised by the White House.

Neither the President nor the Secretary of Defense ever gave orders directly to Navy commanders at sea. Presidential orders were relayed via McNamara to General Taylor or Admiral Anderson, then from the CNO to CINCLANT, and finally from CINCLANT (in his guise as CINCLANTFLT) to Admiral Ward.[293] The White House closely monitored quarantine operations on the HF/SSB radios in the Situation Room, but never used those radios to give orders directly to ships at sea. None of the quarantine force participants contacted by the author, including the Commanding Officers of the two destroyers that boarded <u>Marucla</u>, could recall hearing the President, Secretary of Defense, or CNO on the HF/SSB radio circuit. The only transmissions from the White

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[292] Allison, p. 128. Also see Sorenson, p. 708.

[293] Anderson, interview by author, January 25, 1988; Anderson, "Reminiscences," p. 550; General Taylor, Oral History Transcript, p. 8; Chew, "Reminiscences," pp. 316-17; Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 421.

House to ships at sea appear to have been requests for amplifying information.[294]

The only aspect of quarantine operations controlled directly by the President was the decision as to which ships were to be stopped and boarded. Admiral Dennison and Vice Admiral Ward controlled the intercept and trailing of Soviet bloc ships and all routine movements of the quarantine force. Commanding Officers of quarantine force ships report that their operations were not closely controlled and that they had adequate authority to operate their ships as they felt best. Captain Irvine, Commanding Officer of USS Canberra, states that detailed control by Washington was only exercised when "contact occurred (or would be likely to occur) between U.S. and Soviet units (military or merchant)."[295] Thus, contrary to Allison's assertion, the

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[294] Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 421; Captain William R. Hunnicutt, Jr., Commander Destroyer Squadron Twenty-Six (embarked in USS Dewey on the quarantine line), letter to author, June 1, 1988; Christiansen, interview by author, February 3, 1988; Wissman, letter to author, March 4, 1988; Irvine, letter to author, April 6, 1988; Foust, letter to author, March 10, 1988; Dickey, letter to author, April 20, 1988; Mikhalevsky, letter to author, March 23, 1988.

[295] Irvine, letter to author, April 6, 1988. Also, Ward, "Diary," pp. 11-12; Foust, letter to author, March 10, 1988; Dickey, letter to author, April 20, 1988; Mikhalevsky, letter to author, March 23, 1988. Captain Edelman, Commanding Officer of VP-24, a Navy patrol plane squadron, states that he had adequate authority to conduct ocean surveillance operations as he saw fit. Edelman, letter to author, March 25, 1988.

White House only controlled specific aspects of the quarantine operation and exercised that control through the chain of command.

Although the President personally controlled which ships would be boarded, neither he nor his advisors controlled how the boardings were to be conducted. CINCLANTFLT specified that the boarding procedures contained in the Navy publication Law of Naval Warfare (NWIP 10-2) would be used.[296] OPORD 45-62 stated the following: "Procedures to be followed in the case of visit and search will be similar to those prescribed in Section 502(B) of NWIP 10-2 except that unless specifically authorized, Subsection 8 of Section 502(B) will not be applicable and log entries will not state that prize procedures have been invoked or are being

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[296] Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Naval Warfare Information Publication 10-2 (NWIP 10-2) , Law of Naval Warfare (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, 1959). This would have been the publication that Admiral Anderson was trying to show McNamara during their infamous encounter in Flag Plot the evening of October 24. See Anderson, "Reminiscences," p. 559. Accounts that have the CNO waving the "Manual of Naval Regulations" are nonsensical. See Allison, p. 134; Abel, p. 156. United States Navy Regulations, 1948 contained no guidance at all on blockades, and mentions quarantines only in the sense U.S. navy ships complying with routine customs or medical quarantine. The interesting point about the October 23 McNamara-Anderson argument is that it was not over substantial policy issues. The two men were at odds primarily because each felt he was being treated contemptuously by the other. Their argument reveals very little about how organizations carry out Presidential orders, but much about how individuals perform under stress.

followed."[297] The subsection deleted by CINCPACFLT concerns procedures applicable only in wartime, which is when a blockade--an act of war under international law--normally would have been imposed. The Quarantine Force thus used standard Navy boarding procedures, modified for peacetime application, rather than special procedures drafted in the White House.

The boarding of the Soviet-chartered Lebanese freighter Marucla on October 26 shows how boarding operations were conducted. The decision to board Marucla was made by the President and passed down the chain of command to Admiral Ward, who ordered USS John R. Pierce and USS Joseph P. Kennedy to "Stop and board [at] first light tomorrow."[298] Captain Mikhalevsky confirmed that the the visit and search procedure used was that contained in NWIP 10-2. USS John R. Pierce provided real-time reports on the progress of the boarding to Admiral Ward and CINCLANT on the HF/SSB voice radio net, which was also being monitored in Flag Plot and the White House Situation Room. Captain Foust states he received no guidance from higher authority on how to conduct the boarding while it was in progress. Admiral

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[297] CINCLANTFLT 231710Z OCT 62.

[298] CTF 136 260212Z OCT 62, naval message, October 26, 1962 (Unclassified. Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC).

Ward and CINCLANT occasionally asked questions over the HF/SSB voice radio net, but Flag Plot and the Situation Room were silent.[299] Thus, although the boarding of Marucla was closely monitored by the chain of command, the on-scene commanders were allowed to conduct it at their discretion in accordance with Navy standing orders (NWIP 10-2) and the mission orders for the quarantine (CINCLANTFLT OPORD 45-62).

The remainder of the operations conducted during the quarantine were uneventful. Several ships were intercepted and trailed, but no other ships were stopped and boarded at sea. When Khrushchev on October 28 agreed to remove Soviet offensive missiles from Cuba, the President suspended the boarding of Soviet ships. Accordingly, CINCLANTFLT sent the following order that day:

> Direct no rpt [repeat] no forceful action against any shipping including boarding until further orders. All challenges will be made by visual means (blinking light, etc.). If any difficulties encountered report to me immediately info [notify for information purposes] JCS/CNO prior [to] taking any further action. Acknowledge.[300]

On October 30, after it was determined that there was little threat of Cuban air attack, the quarantine line was moved closer to Cuba. The new line, code named "Chestnut,"

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[299] Mikhalevsky, letter to author, March 23, 1988; Foust, letter to author, March 10, 1988.

[300] CINCLANTFLT 281702Z OCT 62, naval message, October 26, 1962 (Declassified 1986. Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC).

was located just outside the Bahamas Island Chain, about 280 nautical miles from Cuba at its closest point. The Chestnut line contained eight stations clustered at the sealanes through and around the Bahamas. It required ten destroyers, one cruiser, and a HUK Group (compared with 16 destroyers, two cruisers, and a HUK Group for the Walnut line). Ships were frequently detached from the Chestnut line to trail Soviet ships removing missiles from Cuba, but the line remained in effect until the quarantine was lifted on November 21.[301]

Although the boarding of Soviet bloc ships en route to Cuba had been suspended, intercept and trailing continued in November. CINCLANTFLT used the code name "Scotch Tape" to designate high-interest Soviet bloc shipping. The most important operation was the inspection of Soviet ships removing MRBMs from Cuba. The United States had insisted upon inspections to verify removal of the missiles, but Castro refused to allow inspections on Cuban soil. A compromise was reached on November 7 when the United States agreed to inspect the missiles on the decks of Soviet ships. The Soviet Government provided a list of the ships that would be carrying the missiles, the number of missiles

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[301] Ward, "Diary," p. 15; "CINCLANT Historical Account," p. 104; "CNO Historical Narrative," pp. 83-84; Dennison, "Reminiscences," pp. 424-25. Also see Johns, "Naval Quarantine," pp. 116-18.

each would carry, and the course that they would all take from Cuba out into the Atlantic. However, the Soviet ships did not adhere to this plan--taking different courses and not carrying the designated number of missiles--requiring an intensive Navy search effort to locate them and count the missiles. The nine Soviet ships carrying the missiles from Cuba were inspected between November 8 and 11, and all 42 missiles known to be in Cuba were counted. Finally, in early December Navy ships and planes verified the removal of Soviet IL-28 bombers from Cuba, counting all 42 bombers on the decks of three Soviet ships.[302]

There were no incidents between Quarantine Force ships or planes and Soviet merchant ships. Relations at sea between the superpowers were proper--Soviet and American ship captains behaved as professional seamen--and usually amicable. Gifts were exchanged at least once. Some Soviet ship captains were reluctant to comply with the procedures for the MRBM inspections, but they all complied eventually. The Soviets twice filed protests against Navy actions: a Navy patrol plane's search light alarmed a Soviet captain

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[302] "CNO Historical Narrative," pp. 100-103, 107-13, 137-40; "DOD Operations," pp. 5-6; "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 105-108; Dennison, "Reminiscences," pp. 427-430; Ward "Diary," pp. 18-19; National Indications Center, pp. 96-99; USS Vesole (DDR 878), Ship's History for 1962 (Ship's History Branch, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC); "Navy Intercepts 5 Soviet Vessels in Missile Check," New York Times, November 10, 1962, p. 1.

who thought he was he under attack, and the USS *Blandy* (DD 943) was accused of threatening the Soviet ship *Dvinogorsk* while inspecting the MRBMs on its deck.[303] Thus, despite the intense level of interaction between U.S. Navy and Soviet ships, there were no incidents that had an impact on the President's ability to manage the crisis.

The second area of operations in which tactical-level interactions occurred during the Cuban Missile Crisis was U.S. Navy anti-submarine warfare operations against Soviet submarines. Senior Navy officers would later stress the scope and intensity of the ASW operations conducted during the crisis. Admiral Anderson stated that "The presence of Russian submarines in Caribbean and Atlantic waters provided perhaps the first opportunity since World War II for our anti-submarine warfare forces to exercise at their trade, to perfect their skills, and to manifest their capability to detect and follow submarines of another nation."[304] This

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[303] "CINCLANT Historical Narrative," pp. 108-9; Dennison, "Reminiscences," pp. 428-30; Ward, "Sea Power in the Cuban Crisis," pp. 3-4; Ward, "Reminiscences," pp. 197-98. The Navy investigated the charges against USS *Blandy* and concluded that the ship had not made any threats. It is possible, however, that if USS *Blandy* had its weapons manned, it could have upset the Soviet captain.

[304] "Admiral Confirms U.S. Navy Detected and Trailed Soviet Submarines," *New York Times*, November 10, 1962, p. 1; Abel, p. 155. Also see Admiral Anderson's testimony in *Department of Defense Appropriations for 1964*, pp. 256-57; Ward, "Sea Power in the Cuban Crisis," p. 4; Griffin, "Reminiscences," pp. 555-56.

suggests the enthusiasm with which the Navy approached its ASW mission during the crisis.

The Navy began detecting signs of increased Soviet submarine activity in the Atlantic as early as October 13 and began increasing the readiness of its ASW forces accordingly. On October 17 the Soviet submarine replenishment ship Terek was spotted in the North Atlantic headed southwest. Terek was placed under daily surveillance by Navy patrol planes. On October 22 a Soviet Zulu-class diesel-electric attack submarine (armed with only with torpedoes, no missiles), designated contact B-28 in the Navy ASW tracking system, was photographed on the surface refueling from Terek near the Azores. This Zulu submarine was at the end of its patrol and returned to the Soviet Union after refueling, thus playing no role in the crisis. On October 24 CINCLANTFLT advised Admiral Ward that at least three known Soviet submarines were operating in the Atlantic and could reach the quarantine zone in a few days.[305] Thus, at the time the quarantine went into effect, there were no positive Soviet submarine contacts and no Soviet submarines were actively being prosecuted, but there were indications that three Soviet submarines were approaching the quarantine line.

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[305] "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 10, 120-22; Ward, "Diary," p. 11; Dennison, p. 434.

The Navy conducted intensive ASW operations during the crisis. The principle ASW forces were Task Force 81 and Task Force 83, both under the command of Vice Admiral Edmund B. Taylor, Commander Anti-Submarine Warfare Force Atlantic (COMASWFORLANT). Task Force 81 consisted of twelve land-based patrol plane squadrons, about 140 aircraft (P2Vs, P5Ms, and P3Vs). Task Force 83 consisted of four ASW HUK Groups (one of which was assigned to TF 136 at all times) and approximately 24 destroyers and destroyer escorts in Atlantic and Caribbean picket stations. On October 24 seventeen ASW patrol planes and ten submarines were tasked to establish the "Argentia Sub-Air Barrier" in the North Altantic. This ASW barrier, which went into effect October 27 on a southeasterly bearing from Argentia, Newfoundland, remained in operation through November 13. No Soviet submarines were detected attempting to penetrate the barrier. Ships and aircraft of TF 136 (the Quarantine Force) and TF 135 (the Attack Carrier Force), Royal Canadian Navy ships and aircraft, and Air Force reconnaissance aircraft also participated in ASW operations during the crisis.[306]

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[306] "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 120-25, 134; Anderson, "Cuban Crisis," p. 85; "DOD Operations," p. 12. For a description of HUK Group ASW operations in 1962, see Barrett Gallagher, "Searching for Subs in the Atlantic," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 88 (July 1962): 98-113. The Navy also considered activating the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom (GIUK Gap) ASW Barrier, but did not do so. "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 121-22, 132.

The Navy located and trailed five confirmed Soviet submarines, all identified as Foxtrot-class diesel-electric attack submarines, during the crisis. Information on these five contacts is summarized in Table 4. This number excludes the Zulu-class submarine sighted in the Atlantic on October 22, which did not play a role in the crisis. For a contact to be evaluated as confirmed, it either had to be photographed or sighted by several observers well-trained in submarine recognition. About 13 to 20 additional contacts, depending on who is making the judgement, were considered to be "probable" Soviet submarines, but could not meet the strict visual identification criteria to be confirmed (even though several of them were "sighted").[307] For the Soviets

Table 4
Confirmed Soviet Submarines

Contact Number	Submarine Class	Time of First Postive Contact	General Location
C-18	Foxtrot	3:29 p.m. 24 Oct	Atlantic
C-19	Foxtrot	6:11 p.m. 25 Oct	Atlantic
C-20/26	Foxtrot	6:48 a.m. 26 Oct	Atlantic
C-21	Foxtrot	5:05 p.m. 26 Oct	Caribbean
C-23	Foxtrot	3:08 p.m. 26 Oct	Caribbean

Source: Johns, "Naval Quarantine," p. 147; "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 120-25.

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[307] Christiansen, interview by author, February 3, 1988; Admiral Anderson's testimony in Department of Defense Appropriations for 1964, p. 256.

to have had a total of 18 to 24 submarines in the Caribbean and Western Atlantic would have been an incredible and extremely unlikely feat. All but one or two of the probable contacts can be dismissed as additional detections of the confirmed submarines or very realistic false contacts. Only the five confirmed contacts will be discussed further.[308]

President Kennedy and his advisors were concerned about Soviet submarines from their first meetings after Soviet offensive missiles were discovered in Cuba. They appear to have had three concerns. First, they were concerned that submarines would be used to bring nuclear warheads into Cuba for the Soviet missiles. President Kennedy raised this issue during the October 16 morning meeting with his advisors. That afternoon Robert Kennedy

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[308] Past confusion over the number of confirmed Soviet submarine contacts detected during the crisis can now be cleared up. As can be seen in Table 4, one of the Soviet submarines originally had two contact designations, C-20 and C-26, and during the crisis was believed to be two different submarines. This gives a total of six confirmed contacts. For sources that state there were six Soviet submarines, see "CINCLANT Historical Account," p. 11; Abel, p. 155; Robert Kennedy, p. 77; Anderson, "Cuban Crisis," p. 85; and Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 435. After almost a year of careful analysis, the Navy's ASW experts determined that C-20 and C-26 were the same submarine. During the crisis not all of these contacts were accepted as confirmed. One of them, C-21, was never photographed, and originally was classified as only being a "possible" Soviet submarine. For sources that state there were five Soviet submarines, see "DOD Operations," pp. 4-5; Ward, "Diary," p. 12. After the crisis contact C-21 was upgraded to confirmed. The best judgement of the Navy's ASW experts was thus that there were five confirmed contacts.

cautioned that the United States might be forced to sink Soviet submarines to maintain a blockade of Cuba. The CIA estimate prepared October 20 also warned that submarines could bring nuclear warheads into Cuba.[309] The second concern was that the Soviets would establish a submarine base in Cuba. There had been concerns about this well before the crisis, particularly that a fishing port being built by the Soviets at Mariel would be used as a submarine base. This was a major concern for the CNO. Admiral Anderson states in his oral history that "I had taken a particular determination that we were not going to let any Soviet submarines get in and start operating out of bases in Cuba."[310] The third concern was that Soviet submarines would attack Quarantine Force ships or ships standing by for air strikes and invasion of Cuba. Khrushchev exacerbated these concerns on October 24 when he warned American businessman William Knox that Soviet submarines would sink any American ship that forced a Soviet ship to stop. This was not just a Navy concern, the President and McNamara were

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[309] "October 16 Morning Meeting Transcript," pp. 13-14; "October 16 Evening Meeting Transcript," p. 25; SNIE 11-19-62, p. 2.

[310] Anderson, "Reminiscences," p. 557. Admiral Anderson reiterated this point to the author. Anderson, interview by author, January 25, 1988. Also see "CINCLANT Historical Account," p. 11; Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 434; Hilsman, p. 166; Garthoff, Reflections, pp. 75-77.

also concerned about the Soviet submarine threat.[311] Thus, the President and his advisors had several concerns related to Soviet submarines, concerns which were raised from October 16 onward.

In response to concerns that Soviet submarines would bring nuclear warheads into Cuba and that they would start operating out of Cuban bases, the Kennedy Administration included Soviet submarines in the quarantine. Although the President did not state this explicitly in his October 22 speech, he did state that the quarantine covered "all ships of any kind" and would be extended, if needed, to other types of carriers--implying aircraft and submarines. Similarly, the Quarantine Proclamation signed by the President October 23 stated that "any vessel or craft" could be stopped and searched.[312] CINCLANTFLT OPORD 45-62, which was based on JCS guidance reviewed by the President and approved by McNamara, explicitly included submarines in the quarantine. CINCLANTFLT directed that "All ships, including

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[311] On Khrushchev's threat, see William E. Knox, "Close-up of Khrushchev During a Crisis," New York Times Magazine, November 18, 1962, p. 3; Hilsman, p. 214; Sorenson, p. 710; Abel p. 151. Concerns of Task Force commanders were expressed to the author in Rivero, letter to author, March 10, 1988; Stroh, letter to author, February 18, 1988; Hayward, letter to author, February 17, 1988. On the President's concern, see Hilsman, p. 705; Robert Kennedy, pp. 61-62, 70.

[312] "The Soviet Threat to the Americas," Department of State Bulletin 47 (November 12, 1962): 715-20.

combatant, surface <u>and sub-surface</u>, Soviet and non-Soviet, designated by CINCLANTFLT on [the] basis of available information will be intercepted."[313] Thus, Soviet submarines were an explicit target of the quarantine, and could be stopped and searched if proceeding to Cuba.

The greatest difficulty in enforcing a quarantine against submarines is signalling them to surface for identification and search. The CINCLANTFLT operation order did not include specific signals for use with submarines, but did include procedures if a ship or submarine failed to stop after being signalled: "If these means fail, warning shots shall be fired across the bow, or, <u>in case of submarines, equivalent warning action</u>."[314] CINCLANTFLT did not, however, state what constituted an equivalent warning action for submarines.

The JCS, Secretary of Defense, and President had been briefed on Navy ASW operations and procedures prior to the quarantine going into effect.[315] During the evening EXCOMM meeting on October 23, President Kennedy was briefed on intelligence that Soviet submarines were moving toward the Caribbean. In response, according to Robert Kennedy, "The President ordered the Navy to give highest priority to

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[313] CINCLANTFLT 231710Z OCT 62, emphasis added.

[314] Ibid, emphasis added.

[315] Anderson, interview by author, January 25, 1988; Griffin, letter to author, April 6, 1988.

tracking the submarines and to put into effect the greatest possible safety measures to protect out own aircraft carriers and other vessels."[316] An encounter between U.S. Navy ASW forces and Soviet submarines was now almost inevitable.

McNamara, knowing that the quarantine covered submarines and that the President had just directed a maximum ASW effort, was concerned that the lack of a standard means of signalling Soviet submarines to surface could lead to weapons unnecessarily being used against a Soviet submarine. After the evening EXCOMM meeting on October 23, he went to the CNO's office to discuss the problem. Admiral Anderson was in a JCS meeting, but his Deputy for fleet operations, Vice Admiral Griffin (one of three Admirals deputized by the CNO to act in his absence during the crisis), was available. McNamara asked Vice Admiral Griffin how Navy ships could signal a Soviet submarine to surface. McNamara knew from previous ASW briefings that this was not a normal peacetime procedure for the Navy. Vice Admiral Griffin consulted with the CINCLANTFLT staff on the problem and together they devised a unique set of signals that could be used to signal Soviet submarines to surface.[317] McNamara immediately approved the special signals.

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[316] Robert Kennedy, pp. 61-62.

[317] "CNO Historical Narrative," pp. 93-94; Griffin, letter to author, April 6, 1988.

The special "Submarine Surfacing and Identification Procedures" were transmitted to the fleet over the Fleet Radioteletype Broadcast five hours before the quarantine went into effect on October 24.[318] The next day they were broadcast to the world, including the Soviet Union, in a Notice to Mariners, the standard message used by all nations to send warnings of navigation hazards:

> Pursuant to Proclamation of the President of Oct 23rd, 1962 on the "Interdiction of the Delivery of Offensive Weapons to Cuba" the Secretary of Defense has today issued the following submarine surfacing and identification procedures when in contact with U.S. quarantine forces in the general vicinity of Cuba. U.S. forces coming in contact with unidentified submerged submarines will make the following signals to inform the submarine that he may surface in order to identify himself: Signals follow--quarantine forces will drop 4 or 5 harmless explosive sound signals which may be accompanied by the international code signal "IDKCA" meaning "rise to surface." This sonar signal is normally made on underwater communications equipment in the 8 kc frequency range. Procedure on receipt of signal: Submerged submarines, on hearing this signal, should surface on easterly course. Signals and procedures employed are harmless.[319]

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[318] COMCRUDESLANT 240900Z OCT 62, naval message, October 24, 1962 (Unclassified. Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC).

[319] Naval Oceanographic Office, "Notice to Mariners No. 45-62, Special Warnings Nos. 30-33," Paragraphs 5980-5983, October 24-25, 1962 (Naval Oceanographic Office, Washington, DC); NAVOCEANO WASHDC 252124Z OCT 62, "Special Warning Nr. 32," naval message, October 25, 1962 (Unclassified. Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC). These special signals may have been provided to Moscow on October 24, the day before the Notice to Mariners was broadcast. See "DOD Operations," p. 5. These are the signals described by Robert Kennedy, although he misconstrued how they were used. The sonar and explosive charge signals could be used interchangeably, rather than sequentially as described by Kennedy. See Robert Kennedy, p. 69.

This signal is interesting for two reasons. First, these procedures were not a normal part of peacetime Navy ASW procedures, they were created specifically for the quarantine of Cuba. The Navy had procedures for signaling unidentified submerged submarines, but their only purpose was to determine if a contact was a U.S. submarine. McNamara thus tailored Navy ASW procedures to meet the President's political objectives. Second, the signal "IDKCA" did not come out of the International Code of Signals used by sea-going vessels, which does not contain a signal for submarines to surface.[320] Soviet submarines would have no idea what it meant unless their Government informed them of it. The Soviet Union thus had to make a deliberate decision whether or not to inform its submarines of the signals.

To ensure that the Soviets understood the intent of this Notice, a "Defense Department spokesman" told the press that "should a submarine refuse to cooperate, it would be subject to the same orders applied to other vessels, calling for the 'minimum amount of force necessary'--sinking if necessary--to require the vessel to permit itself to be

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[320] See International Code of Signals, For Visual, Sound and Radio Communications, Adopted by the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization, United States Edition (Washington, DC: U.S. Navy Hydrographic Office, Publication No. 102, 1954). The code mentioned in the Notice to Mariners is the international Morse code, vice the maritime signal code.

searched."[321] This statement gives the essence of the guidance provided by CINCLANTFLT to the Quarantine Force, and is similar to other statements used to warn the Soviets about key provisions in U.S. rules of engagement. The statement was not a bluff: the President had in hand contingency orders for the Navy to destroy Soviet submarines if they attempted to interfere with the quarantine.[322] Thus, by October 25 the Kennedy Administration had publicly warned the Soviets that the quarantine applied to their submarines as well as their merchant ships, and had tailored U.S. Navy ASW procedures to support that policy.

There are indications--far from conclusive--that President Kennedy may have used Navy ASW operations as an additional means of demonstrating American resolve and applying coercive pressure on the Soviets. Robert Kennedy alludes to this, suggesting that the President "increased the pressure" on Khrushchev by ordering the Navy to harass Soviet submarines.[323] Admiral Anderson has made statements that support Robert Kennedy. In 1973 he stated that ASW operations were "of immense psychological significance to emphasize to the USSR that any confrontation with the U.S.

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[321] "U.S. Sets Up a Warning System to Halt Submarines off Cuba," New York Times, October 26, 1962, p. 18.

[322] Sorenson, p. 709; Weintal and Bartlett, p. 66.

[323] Robert Kennedy, p. 77. Also see George, "Cuban Missile Crisis," pp. 112-13.

was in an area where the U.S. had undoubted naval supremacy."[324] In 1987 Admiral Anderson made a more explicit reference to the issue: "It did not particularly create any problems for the Navy that McNamara wanted to send political signals with antisubmarine warfare operations, carefully measured, with limitations on action and diplomatic intentions."[325] However, none of the other participants in the crisis have reported deliberate use of ASW as a political signal and there are no discussions of this topic in available records of EXCOMM meetings.[326] Robert Kennedy's recollection must therefore be tempered with the qualifications that political signalling was not the primary purpose of the ASW operations and that ASW operations were not among the primary means of signalling the Soviets. Rather, ASW operations were used to reinforce political signals being sent primarily by the quarantine, Strategic Air Command alert, and invasion preparations.

ASW was not one of President Kennedy's top priorities during the crisis. Available EXCOMM records do not reveal Navy ASW operations to be a frequent topic of conversation and Vice Admiral Houser indicates that ASW was primarily

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[324] Anderson, "Cuban Crisis," p. 85.

[325] Anderson, "As I Recall," p. 45.

[326] Vice Admiral Houser and Rear Admiral Shepard state that ASW was not used as a political signal. Houser, letter to author, March 9, 1988; Shepard, letter to author, March 22, 1988.

regarded as a support operation for the quarantine.[327] The President and McNamara did not attempt to modify Navy ASW procedures other than with the special surfacing signals. Navy Officers that participated in ASW operations during the crisis report that, other than the special signals, they used normal peacetime ASW procedures.[328] This was not a

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[327] Houser, interview by author, February 11, 1988.

[328] Twelve Navy Officers who trailed confirmed Soviet submarines during the crisis stated that they used normal peacetime ASW procedures (the contacts they prosecuted are given in parentheses): Christiansen (C-18 and C-19), Commander of the Essex HUK Group, interview by author, February 3, 1988; Wissman (C-18 and C-19), Operations Officer for the Essex HUK Group, letter to author, March 4, 1988; Morrison (C-18 and C-19), Commander of the destroyers in the Essex HUK Group, interview by author, February 3, 1988; Captain William H. Morgan (C-19), Commanding Officer of USS Cony (DD 508), letter to author, April 7, 1988; Captain Richard D. Faubion (C-19), Commanding Officer of USS Bache (DDR 470), letter to author, February 29, 1988; Commander Stephen F. Durbin (C-19), Commanding Officer of USS Eaton (DD 510), letter to author, March 15, 1988; Captain Charles P. Rozier (C-20/26), Commanding Officer of USS Charles P. Cecil (DDR 835), interview by author, January 30, 1988; Dickey (C-20/26), Commanding Officer of USS Lawe (DD 763), letter to author, April 20, 1988; Commander John R. Riediger (C-21), Commanding Officer of USS Basilone (DD 824), letter to author, April 11, 1988; Commander John M. Dinwiddie (C-21), Commanding Officer of USS Hank (DD 702), letter to author, April 28, 1988; Edelman (C-21), Commanding Officer of VP-24, letter to author, March 25, 1988; Commander Charles H. Hayden (C-21), Commanding Officer of USS Charles H. Roan (DD 853), letter to author, May 10, 1988. Five other Navy Officers who participated in ASW operations stated that they used normal peacetime ASW procedures: Gayler, letter to author, March 22, 1988; Foust, letter to author, March 10, 1988; Captain John L. Kent, Commanding Officer of VS-24, letter to author, March 25, 1988; Captain William K. Doty, Commanding Officer of USS Hawkins (DDR 973), letter to author, March 17, 1988; Captain Robert H. Small, Commanding Officer of USS Abbot (DD 629), letter to author, June 20, 1988.

lapse on McNamara's part: the Navy's peacetime ASW procedures were relatively safe. In fact, the special surfacing signal was a *more aggressive* measure than Navy ships were normally allowed to take in peacetime. The one other difference from normal peacetime operations was that during the crisis shore-based and carrier-based ASW aircraft carried live MK-43 ASW homing torpedoes.[329] This action was consistent with the level of DEFCON in effect during the crisis (DEFCON 3) and prevailing concerns over the Soviet submarine threat. It is not known if the President ordered ASW aircraft to carry live ASW ordnance, or even knew that they were doing so. Navy commanders had the authority to take this action on their own initiative, so there was no need for the President to have ordered it.

The White House did not attempt to exercise direct control over ASW operations. Navy Officers that participated in ASW operations during the crisis report that they did not experience close high-level control of their operations.[330] On the other hand, because operational

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[329] Christiansen, interview by author, February 3, 1988; Edelman, letter to author, March 25, 1988.

[330] Christiansen, interview by author, February 3, 1988; Wissman, letter to author, March 4, 1988; Morgan, letter to author, April 7, 1988; Faubion, letter to author, February 29, 1988; Durbin, letter to author, March 15, 1988; Rozier, interview by author, January 30, 1988; Dickey, letter to author, April 20, 1988; Dinwiddie, April 28, 1988; Hayden, letter to author, May 10, 1988; Gayler, letter to author, March 22, 1988; Small, letter to author, June 20, 1988.

reports were being made to CINCLANTFLT on the HF/SSB voice net, the White House could monitor the progress of ASW operations. In his oral history Admiral Ward describes a reporting a submarine contact to the White House, and being told not to take offensive action against it.[331] Thus, the CNO, Secretary of Defense, or President could have intervened if prosecution of a Soviet submarine started getting out of hand.

The special "Submarine Surfacing and Identification Procedures" were used several times during the crisis. Available information is incomplete, but the special signals apparently were used on at least two of the five confirmed Soviet submarines (C-19 and C-21), and may have been used on two others (C-18 and C-20/26).[332] Both the Morse code signal ("IDKCA") and the explosive charge signal (four or five charges) were used. Every time that the explosive charge signal was sent by ASW aircraft, they dropped practice depth charges (PDCs). PDCs were small explosive charges routinely used by the Navy in peacetime for an echo

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[331] Ward, "Reminiscences," p. 194. Captain Dickey described an ASW prosecution being monitored by Flag Plot on the HF/SSB net. Dickey, letter to author, April 20, 1988. Captain Wissman recalled the Navy chain of command paying close attention to ASW prosecution. Wissman, letter to author, March 4, 1988.

[332] Edelman, letter to author, March 25, 1988; Wissman, letter to author, March 4, 1988; Dinwiddie, letter to author, April 28, 1988; Dickey, letter to author, April 20, 1988. These are the signals referred to by Robert Kennedy. See Robert Kennedy, p. 69.

ranging technique known as "Julie" and for sending signals to U.S. submarines in ASW exercises. Navy patrol planes and HUK groups had been tracking Soviet submarines for years in the Atlantic, so the Soviet captains knew what PDCs sounded like.[333] Every time that the explosive charge signal was sent by surface ships, they dropped hand grenades.[334] Thus, contrary to what the organizational process model would predict, the Navy readily adapted to a civilian-inspired modification to its ASW procedures.[335]

The results achieved with the "Submarine Surfacing and Identification Procedures" were mixed. Submerged Soviet

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[333] Edelman, letter to author, March 25, 1988; Kent, letter to author, March 25, 1988; Wissman, letter to author, March 4, 1988. The Navy had different types of PDCs, but ASW aircraft were restricted to using a particular type (MK 64) and requests to use other, larger charges were denied. The type of PDCs used by ASW aircraft are shown in a photograph in Gallagher, p. 103. The fact that MK 64 PDCs were routinely used in exercises with U.S. submarines indicates that the Navy believed they were a safe signaling method (MK 64 charges were phased out in about 1980 and replaced by MK 84 electronic signalling devices).

[334] Dinwiddie, letter to author, April 28, 1988; Rozier, interview by author, January 30, 1988. Ships normally did not carry PDCs: they had sonar and underwater telephone, so did not did not need PDCs. Hand grenades had about the same explosive charge as MK 64 PDCs.

[335] Although this observation illustrates a weakness in the organizational process model, it does not disprove the model. The Navy readily adopted the special signals because they provided an additional tactic to use against Soviet submarines--a means that otherwise would not have been available (such signals were not permitted in normal peace-time operations). Thus, in this case the organizational process model, properly applied, predicts that the Navy would support, rather than resist, a civilian intrusion into its operations.

submarines essentially ignored the sonar and explosive charge signals. There were no reported instances of a Soviet submarine immediately surfacing upon hearing the signals--the Navy did not literally "force" any Soviet submarines to surface. Soviet submarines surfaced because they needed to replenish air and batteries, or because they had some kind of mechanical problem that had to be repaired on the surface. The Navy can claim, however, that it forced Soviet submarines to surface in the presence of U.S. ships--a humiliation for a submarine captain. On the other hand, the Soviet submarines did not react to the signals with other than their normal efforts at evasion. The Soviet submarines attempted to evade being tracked, sometimes successfully, but their efforts were sporadic. Captain Rozier faced one of the more determined opponents, but was able to maintain contact for over 35 hours despite the submarine's efforts to evade him.[336]

There are indications that the Soviet Government may have directed its submarines to comply with the U.S. "Submarine Surfacing and Identification Procedures." At least three of the contacts surfaced on an easterly heading, as specified in the U.S. Notice to Mariners. Although this suggests that the Soviet submarines were directed to comply

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[336] "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 122-24; Rozier, interview by author, January 30, 1988; Anderson, interview by author, January 25, 1988; Christiansen, interview by author, February 3, 1988.

with the U.S. instructions, it is not conclusive: the three submarines had been on an easterly heading before surfacing anyway. There are no clear cases of Soviet submarines making a large course change specifically to surface on an easterly heading. What is more revealing is the fact that they surfaced at all. Normally, a submarine need only expose its snorkel to recharge its batteries and replenish it air. It was unusual, and striking to experienced ASW operators, that all five of the Soviet submarines fully surfaced, sometimes repeatedly, rather than just snorkeling. This led some Navy Officers to conclude that submarines were ordered to surface and identify themselves if challenged by the U.S. Navy.[337] Thus, although the evidence is not conclusive, the Soviet Government does appear to have directed its submarines to comply with the U.S. instructions.

Soviet submarine operations during the Cuban Missile Crisis had a discernible pattern, but not the pattern commonly described in accounts of the crisis. It was unusual for there to be five Soviet submarines in or near the Caribbean--the normal number was two or three.[338] During the crisis, two confirmed Soviet submarines (C-21 and

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[337] "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 122-24; "DOD Operations," p. 5; Edelman, letter to author, March 25, 1988; Gayler, letter to author, March 22, 1988; Rozier, interview by author, January 30, 1988.

[338] Caldwell, letter to author, March 14, 1988.

C-23) operated in the Caribbean. These two Soviet submarines appear to have been on routine Caribbean patrols. One of them (C-21) was operating near Guantanamo in the Windward Passage--a strategic location for monitoring U.S. Navy movements--when first detected.

The other three confirmed Soviet submarines (C-18, C-19, and C-20/26) operated in the Atlantic east and northeast of the Bahamas. They were detected moving toward the quarantine zone shortly before the quarantine went into effect. Some accounts have described these three submarines as escorting the Soviet merchant ships carrying offensive arms to Cuba. In fact, their locations and movements were unrelated to those of the merchant ships. The Soviet freighters were scattered across the Atlantic, rather than being in a convoy or following a common track toward Cuba. Additionally, the Soviet submarines were scattered over a large area, rather than concentrated around a particular ship or group of ships.[339]

The interesting aspect of these three contacts was pointed out in the CINCLANT report: "Shortly after their discovery the submarines began a return to the Russian Northern Fleet bases."[340] Navy Officers that prosecuted

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[339] "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 120-25; Johns, "Naval Quarantine," p. 147.

[340] "CINCLANT Historical Account," p. 11. The detailed description of ASW operations during the crisis makes it clear that this statement applies only to the three Soviet

these three contacts confirm that the Soviet submarines were all headed away from the Caribbean, eastward or northeastward into the Atlantic.[341] Given that these submarines were all confirmed between October 24 and 26, it appears that the Soviet government ordered them to reverse course and return home on October 24 or 25. If this is correct, the Soviets could well have decided to recall their submarines as early as October 23--the same day they ordered their merchant ships to halt or return home. Greater time delays would have been experienced in getting the recall order out to submerged submarines, which had to expose a radio mast above the surface in order to receive messages.[342] The most likely scenario is that Soviets decided to recall their submarines on October 25, after the United States revealed its "Submarine Surfacing and Identification Procedures" and warned that force would be used against submarines that failed to comply. However, the possibility cannot be dismissed that the Soviets may have decided to recall their

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submarines in the Atlantic. The two Soviet submarines in the Caribbean attempted, with little success, to maintain surveillance of the two U.S. attack carriers operating south of Cuba.

[341] Christiansen, interview by author, February 3, 1988; Dickey letter to author, April 20, 1988.

[342] Ironically, aggressive Navy ASW operations may have inadvertently delayed receipt of the recall order by one or two of the Soviet submarines. However, there was probably no way that the United States could have known that Moscow was recalling its submarines until after their movements became apparent.

submarines on October 23 or 24, perhaps in response to a private warning from the United States, but before the special signals were published and the public warning was given.

There were no significant incidents between U.S. Navy ASW forces and Soviet submarines during the Cuban Missile Crisis. There were no near collisions with submerged or surfaced Soviet submarines. In accordance with peacetime Navy ASW procedures, when Soviet submarines surfaced they were politely asked in the international maritime code, "Do you require assistance?" Some of the submarines were also asked to identify themselves (two responded), but none were ordered to stop for boarding.[343] Navy ships and planes practiced ASW tactics while tracking submerged Soviet submarines.[344] This is routine in peacetime ASW operations, so the Soviet captains would have experienced it before while being hunted and tracked in the Atlantic. This posed little danger to the Soviet submarines (The greater danger was that Navy ships or aircraft might collide with each other during ASW maneuvers). Significantly, the Soviets,

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[343] "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 120-25; Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 435; Lassell, letter to author May 11, 1988; Wissman, letter to author, March 4, 1988; Christiansen, interview by author, February 3, 1988; Morrison, interview by author, February 3, 1988; Riediger, letter to author, April 11, 1988; Durbin, letter to author, March 15, 1988.

[344] Morrison, interview by author, February 3, 1988; Dinwiddie, letter to author, April 28, 1988.

who were quick to protest U.S. actions that appeared to threaten their merchant ships, did not file any protests against U.S. ASW operations. It is extremely unlikely that the Soviets would have ignored and not protested a serious incident involving one of their submarines.

A search of available Navy records and questioning of Navy Officers involved in the ASW operations indicates that no torpedoes or full-size (lethal) depth charges were dropped on Soviet submarines.[345] This confirms that Elie Abel was correct when he stated that "At no time were

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[345] The two major Navy reports on the crisis do not mention any weapons incidents. See "CNO Historical Narrative;" CINCLANT Historical Account." The CNO contends were were no weapons incidents. Anderson, interview by author, January 25, 1988. Five of the Officers who prosecuted Soviet submarines stated there were no weapons incidents (the contacts they prosecuted are given in parentheses): Christiansen (C-18 and C-19), interview by author, February 3, 1988; Morrison (C-18 and C-19), interview by author, February 3, 1988; Morgan (C-19), letter to author, April 7, 1988; Rozier (C-20/26), interview by author, January 30, 1988; Edelman (C-21), letter to author, March 25, 1988. Three other Officers who prosecuted Soviet submarines stated that they did not know of any weapons incidents: Dickey (C-20/26), letter to author, April 20, 1988; Dinwiddie (C-21), letter to author, April 28, 1988; Hayden (C-21), letter to author, May 10, 1988 (Commander Hayden was in charge of prosecuting contact C-21 while it trailed the <u>Enterprise</u> carrier task group). These responses cover four of the five confirmed Soviet submarines (C-18, C-19, C-20/26, and C-21). The fifth confirmed contact (C-23) was prosecuted by ASW aircraft from VP-56 and VS-26. The commanders of those two squadrons could not be located, but Navy records indicate that no weapons were used in the prosecution of contact C-23. Five other Navy Officers who participated in ASW escort and patrol also stated that there were no weapons incidents: Gayler, letter to author, March 22, 1988; Foust, letter to author, March 10, 1988; Kent, March 25, 1988; Doty, letter to author, March 17, 1988; Small, letter to author, June 20, 1988.

weapons fired."[346] Thus, there do not appear to have been any instances of Navy ships or ASW aircraft using live ordnance against Soviet submarines.

A possible source of confusion was that not all of the Navy commanders at sea received the message containing the "Submarine Surfacing and Identification Procedures."[347] Because destroyers were frequently shifted among the various Task Groups, it would have been possible for a destroyer Commanding Officer to know about the special signals while his Task Group Commander did not.[348] On one occasion during the prosecution of a confirmed contact (C-19), the Destroyer Division Commander in charge of the prosecution, apparently frustrated by the Soviet submarine's refusal to surface in response to the special signals, requested permission to

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[346] Abel, p. 155.

[347] Rear Admiral Christiansen and Captain Morrison, who prosecuted contacts C-18 and C-19, and Captain Rozier, who prosecuted contact C-20/26, did not know about the special signals. Christiansen, interview by author, February 3, 1988; Morrison, interview by author, February 3, 1988; Rozier, interview by author, January 30, 1988.

[348] This probably explains the incident related to Sagan by a senior Navy Officer, in which a zealous commander dropped depth charges on a contact. Sagan, p. 117. As Sagan suggests, the charges undoubtedly were hand grenades or PDCs, which were authorized, and were dropped in order to send the special signals approved by McNamara. Commanding Officers were authorized to use the special signals at their own discretion, there was no requirement to get permission from higher authority (Some HUK Group Commanders may have controlled use of the explosive signals themselves for coordination purposes--the explosive signals could interfere with "Julie" explosive echo ranging).

drop full-size (lethal) depth charges (rather than PDCs) at a distance from the submarine as an even stronger signal to surface. This request was denied by the Task Group Commander (the Destroyer Division Commander's immediate superior).[349] Thus, although available records do not establish conclusively that there were no deliberate or accidental weapons incidents, the preponderance of evidence--including the absence of Soviet protests--is that none occurred.

Although weapons were never employed against Soviet submarines, there was a remote possibility that the explosive charge signals could damage a submarine. Captain Lassell, the Destroyer Division Commander at Key West, Florida (then home of the Navy's leading ASW training and tactics development center), maintains that the explosive signals were safe: "A PDC could not damage a submarine even if it were in contact with the hull."[350] This is a reasonable assessment, given that the Navy routinely used PDCs against its own submarines. Nevertheless, it is conceivable, even if unlikely, that a PDC detonating against an already weak point in a submarine's hull could exacerbate existing damage, causing a minor leak, or could damage the submarines's rudder or diving planes.

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[349] Faubion, letter to author, February 29, 1988.

[350] Lassell, letter to author, May 11, 1988.

Two of the Soviet submarines that surfaced during the crisis (C-18 and C-20/26) remained on surface for an extended period. In both cases, crewmen were observed on deck apparently making repairs to hatches or the hull.[351] The explosive charge signal was never used in the prosecution of contact C-20/26, so that submarine's problem probably was not due to PDCs. Captain Rozier suggests that the submarine may have had a hatch that would not seal properly and that the crew apparently was able to repair the hatch.[352] The other Soviet submarine (C-18) suffered more serious damage: it was unable to submerge after it surfaced and eventually was taken in tow. Captain Wissman, one of the officers who prosecuted C-18, speculated that the submarine may have been damaged by a PDC. However, the Soviets never filed a protest and Admiral Dennison attributed the casualty to some sort of machinery failure (a PDC could not damage internal machinery).[353] The problems experienced by C-18 probably were not caused by PDCs.

In summary, the Kennedy Administration included Soviet submarines in the quarantine of Cuba. The Navy was directed

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[351] "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 122-24; Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 435; Christiansen, interview by author, February 3, 1988; Rozier, interview by author, January 30, 1988.

[352] Rozier, interview by author, January 30, 1988.

[353] Wissman, letter to author, March 4, 1988; Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 435.

to surface, board, and inspect Soviet submarines that were discovered en route to Cuba. Standard Navy peacetime ASW procedures were modified specifically to support the President's political objectives. Secretary of Defense McNamara approved special signals devised by the Navy for signalling submarines to surface for identification. The rules of engagement issued for the quarantine specifically addressed when force could be used against submarines. When informed that Soviet submarines were moving into the quarantine area, the President directed the Navy to launch a maximum ASW effort. The Soviet Union was informed of the "Submarine Surfacing and Identification Procedures" and was warned that force would be used against submarines that failed to comply.

By themselves, these observations suggest an overly optimistic view of how the Kennedy Administration handled Navy ASW operations during the crisis. ASW was viewed in the EXCOMM as a supporting operation, rather than as one of the central operations in the crisis. ASW operations thus do not appear to have received as much attention as other areas, despite the fact that ASW operations genereate the most intense interactions with Soviet forces. The President may not have fully understood the operational implications of Navy ASW operations--such as the fact that Navy ASW planes and helicopters were carrying live ordnance while they trailed Soviet submarines. Nevertheless, McNamara attempted to ensure that Navy ASW operations supported the President's political objectives.

The President and McNamara chose not to exercise direct control over ASW operations, but were kept abreast of the operations. The Situation Room displayed all but the most sensitive information on the tactical situation at sea and McNamara was briefed in detail at least once daily in Flag Plot. The President had the capability to monitor the trailing of Soviet submarines real-time over HF/SSB voice radio--except when circuit overload or propagation problems interrupted voice communications (see the earlier discussion of these problems). Although the President apparently chose not to monitor ASW operations over voice radio, he or McNamara could have intervened if they felt that things were getting out of hand.

U.S. Navy ASW forces complied with their rules of engagement and the ASW procedures specified for the quarantine. They used the special signals and did not fire any weapons against Soviet submarines. The only potential incidents were the possibility that U.S. ASW operations may have delayed Soviet submarines from receiving a recall order, and the remote possibility that contact C-18 might have been damaged by a PDC. Other than this, there were no incidents between U.S. ASW forces and Soviet submarines despite the intense ASW operations that were conducted during the crisis.

These findings challenge the prevailing view of Navy ASW operations during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Commenting on Robert Kennedy's description of the Wednesday morning EXCOMM meeting in which the President was informed of a submarine near the quarantine line, Allison made the following assertion: "What neither the President nor his colleagues knew however, was that prior to the experience through which they were living, American destroyers had encountered Soviet submarines--according to the Navy's standard operating procedures. McNamara discovered this during the course of his Wednesday evening visit to the Flag Plot."[354] This assertion contains several serious errors. First, the President had been informed the previous day (October 23) that Soviet submarines were moving into the area and had directed the Navy to launch a maximum ASW effort. Second, the President was told during the Wednesday morning EXCOMM meeting that USS Essex had been tasked to prosecute the Soviet submarine. Third, the first positive contact between Navy ASW units and a Soviet submarine did not occur until 3:29 p.m. Wednesday, well after the morning

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[354] Allison, p. 138. Similarly, Nathan, citing Robert Kennedy's account of the October 24 morning EXCOMM meeting, contends that "the Navy began to force Soviet subs to the surface in order to defend its blockade--well before Kennedy had authorized contact with surface vessels." Nathan asserts, with no apparent evidence, that the President was "horrified" when he found out that the Navy intended to surface Soviet submarines. Nathan, pp. 261-2. Nathan's interpretation seriously distorts Robert Kennedy's account, and is proven false by the evidence in this study.

EXCOMM meeting. Fourth, the Navy was not just following standard operating procedures--Soviet submarines had explicitly been included in the quarantine by guidance reviewed by the President and approved by McNamara. Finally, McNamara knew about Navy ASW operations before he visited Flag Plot Wednesday evening (October 24). What he learned during that visit was that a specific destroyer from the Essex HUK Group was trailing a Soviet submarine (contact C-18)--an action that McNamara authorized. Allison's interpretation of ASW operations during the crisis thus has no validity.

John Steinbruner alleges that Navy ASW operations threatened to upset the strategic balance and disrupt the President's political strategy for the crisis:

> Until well into the crisis, however, it escaped their attention that the US Navy would pursue Soviet submarines in the North Atlantic as a normal operational measure in support of the large US naval deployment establishing the blockade. In fact, the naval commanders, with ample operational authority to do so (unless it was specifically denied), chose to pursue this mission very aggressively from the outset. Since Soviet submarines carrying cruise missiles with nuclear warheads were inevitably one of the targets of American anti-submarine warfare (ASW) operations, and since these submarines were one of the prime force elements the Soviet government would have to rely upon should they have to undertake retaliation for strategic attack, the actions of the US Navy constituted extremely strong coercion and violated the spirit of the Executive Committee policy.[355]

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[355] John Steinbruner, "An Assessment of Nuclear Crises," in Franklyn Griffiths and John C. Polanyi, eds., The Dangers of Nuclear War (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), p. 38. Also see Desmond Ball, "Nuclear War at

The only accurate statement in this analysis is that Navy commanders had ample operational authority (unless it was specifically denied) to conduct ASW in the North Atlantic. The rest is erroneous. First, the President and McNamara knew by at least October 21 that the Navy would be pursuing Soviet submarines in support of the quarantine. McNamara had explicitly included submarines among the vessels that the Navy was permitted to stop and board. The President and McNamara appear to have shared Navy concern that Soviet submarines might attack Navy quarantine ships and were generally supportive of Navy ASW objectives.

Second, McNamara undoubtedly and the President probably knew about Navy ASW operations in the Atlantic outside the quarantine area. The Argentia ASW barrier, ordered on October 24 and established on October 27, was displayed on the charts in Flag Plot and thus would have been seen by McNamara during his daily briefings. The CNO would have had to make an extraordinary effort to prevent McNamara from learning about the barrier.[356] However, the CNO had no motive for hiding the barrier from McNamara.

Sea," International Security 10 (Winter 1985-86): 19-20; Barry R. Posen "Inadvertent Nuclear War? Escalation and NATO's Northern flank," International Security 7 (Fall 1982): 31.

[356] The Canadian Government would have had to join the CNO's conspiracy: Royal Canadian Navy planes participated in the barrier and U.S. Navy planes operated out of bases in Canada. "CINCLANT Historical Account," p. 124.

Third, no Soviet missile submarines were trailed in the North Atlantic. McNamara stated during the October 27 EXCOMM meeting that there were three Soviet submarines off the U.S. coast, but that "as far as we know they don't carry missiles."[357] Further, the CINCLANT report states that no Soviet submarines were detected by the Argentia ASW Barrier.[358] The only submarines trailed by the Navy in the Atlantic during the crisis were the three Foxtrot-class torpedo-armed attack submarines that entered the quarantine area. The only Soviet submarine-launched cruise missile credited with a land attack capability in 1962 (the SS-N-3) was the size of a jet fighter and had to be carried in very large tubes outside the hull. The Soviets had no cruise missiles that could be launched from torpedo tubes, excluding the Foxtrots from the strategic nuclear deterrence role. Thus, Navy ASW operations did not constitute "extremely strong coercion," at least not for the reason given by Steinbruner.

Fourth, the Navy conducted its ASW operations essentially in the manner that the President desired. The special surfacing signals were used as specified by McNamara. Force was not used against Soviet submarines because they did not take actions that warranted use of

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[357] "October 27 Meetings Transcript," p. 53.

[358] "CINCLANT Historical Account," p. 124.

force under the rules of engagement approved by McNamara. Soviet submarines were treated courteously when they surfaced. Thus, contrary to Steinbruner's assertion, Navy ASW operations did not violate "the spirit of Executive Committee policy."

The final step in this review of U.S. Navy operations during the Cuban Missile Crisis is to examine the interactions with Soviet and cuban forces that could have occurred and the interactions with those forces that did occur. The following interactions conceivably could have occurred during the crisis: Soviet submarine, perhaps mistaking U.S. efforts to make it surface as indications of attack, fires a torpedo at a U.S. warship, prompting the U.S. ship to return fire; Soviet submarine ignores U.S. signals to surface and attempts to proceed to a Cuban port, prompting the President to order it destroyed; Soviet merchant ship does not receive recall order, attempts to pass through blockade line, refuses order to halt, and is fired on by a U.S. warship; Soviet merchant ship uses force against a U.S. Navy boarding party, prompting U.S. warships to destroy it; Soviet merchant ship resists being taken into custody, prompting the President to order it destroyed; Cuban aircraft attack a U.S. civilian merchant ship, Navy warship, or military aircraft in international waters or airspace, prompting U.S. ships or aircraft to return fire; Cuban naval vessels attack a U.S. merchant ship or warship in international waters, prompting U.S. ships or aircraft to return fire; Cuban coastal defense anti-ship cruise missiles fire on a U.S. merchant ship or warship in international waters, prompting the President to order retaliatory strikes against Cuban coastal defense missile sites; Cuban fighters attack U.S. low-level photographic reconnaissance aircraft, causing an air battle with U.S. fighters waiting outside Cuban airspace; Cuban anti-aircraft guns shoot down a U.S. low-level photographic reconnaissance aircraft, prompting the President to order retaliatory strikes against Cuban air defenses. This list is not comprehensive, but does provide an indication of the many ways in which violent incidents could have occurred during the crisis.

Additionally, a wide range of accidents could have occurred, including U.S. Navy ships or planes accidently firing a weapon near a Soviet submarine or merchant ship, a Soviet submarine accidently firing a torpedo near a U.S. warship, collisions between U.S. warships and Soviet submarines or merchant ships, aircraft crashing over or near Cuba (causing speculation that the Cubans shot them down), and Cuban Komar missile boats or coastal defense missile sites accidently firing an anti-ship cruise missile during testing or training. This list is representative, rather than comprehensive, and some of these accidents were more likely to occur than others (collisions were the greatest danger). The high tempo of U.S. Navy operations during the crisis, particularly the intense quarantine and ASW operations, suggests that there was ample opportunity for inadvertent military incidents to occur. Given the high level of tensions between the United States and Soviet Union, any of these incidents could have triggered a clash between U.S. forces and Soviet or Cuban forces.

There were, in fact, significant tactical-level interactions during the crisis. Most important were the interactions between the U.S. Quarantine Force and Soviet merchant ships, and between U.S. ASW forces and Soviet submarines. There were also low-intensity interactions between U.S. low altitude reconnaissance planes and Cuban air defenses, in the form of Cuban anti-aircraft guns firing on the U.S. planes, and interactions between Cuban naval units and U.S. Navy ships and patrol planes in the Florida Strait. Cuban Komar missile boats were active in Cuban waters during the crisis and occasionally ventured out into the Florida Strait at night. They did not, however, take any threatening actions toward U.S. vessels and retreated to Cuban waters when illuminated by Navy patrol planes.[359]

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[359] The CIA reported that Cuban naval units were deployed to defend Cuban harbors. CIA, "Crisis USSR/Cuba," October 24, 1962, p. I-1. Navy ships and patrol planes frequently spotted Cuban naval vessels and planes, but there were no close encounters even though U.S. Navy ships operated as close as three nautical miles from the Cuban coast on several occasions. Lassell, letter to author, May 11, 1988; Wissman, letter to author, March 4, 1988; Edelman, letter to author, March 25, 1988; Foust, letter to author, March 10, 1988; Dickey, letter to author, April 20, 1988;

None of these interactions were as intense as they could have been. Interactions with Soviet merchant ships and submarines were limited by Khrushchev's decision to recall the freighters carrying arms and the three submarines operating in the Atlantic. The only Soviet ships that entered the quarantine zone were those that the United States would have no reason to take into custody. The three Soviet submarines that were of greatest concern had all reversed course and were headed home by the time U.S. Navy ASW forces were able to locate and prosecute them. Had Khrushchev directed the freighters and submarines to continue toward Cuba, the intensity of tactical-level interactions at sea would have been much more severe.

Interactions with Cuban forces were constrained by an apparent decision by Castro not to provoke a confrontation with the United States. The CIA daily intelligence report for October 26 noted that "The armed forces remain under strict orders not to fire unless fired upon."[360] The Cuban

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Captain William C. Magee, Commanding Officer of USS Claud Jones (DE 1033), letter to author, May 12, 1988. Navy low-level photographic reconnaissance planes were fired on by Cuban anti-aircraft guns on October 27, but were not hit. On one occasion Navy reconnaissance jets, which had no armament, spotted two Cuban Migs while on a mission over Cuba. The U.S. pilots reacted with "Burner now!": they activated their afterburners for high speed evasion. The Cuban Migs did not attempt to pursue the fast Corsairs. Captain William B. Ecker, Commanding Officer of VFP-62, letter to author, March 19, 1988.

[360] CIA, "Crisis USSR/Cuba," October 26, 1962, p. I-2.

air force was relatively inactive throughout the crisis and the Cuban navy avoided confrontations with the U.S. Navy. The anti-aircraft fire on October 27 was the only exception to this pattern of caution, but appears to have been an isolated incident--there was no further anti-aircraft fire against U.S. planes. If Castro had decided to demonstrate defiance of the United States--to back up his inflammatory rhetoric with military actions--there probably would have been a Caribbean version of the Tonkin Gulf Incident. Once an initial Cuban attack had taken place, U.S. forces would have been at hair trigger readiness for further attacks. Repeated Cuban provocations, particularly a successful Cuban attack on a U.S. ship, probably would have led the President to order destruction of the Cuban navy and air force.

Khrushchev's early decision not to challenge the U.S. quarantine meant that President Kennedy and the Navy commanders at sea were never confronted with a situation in which they had to decide whether or not to use force against Soviet ships or submarines. At the time, however, this was not clear to the President or the chain of command. Khrushchev did not announce his actions, the United States had to infer them from the movements of Soviet ships and submarines. As late as Saturday, October 27, it still was not clear to U.S. leaders that Khrushchev would refrain from challenging the quarantine, even though several Soviet ships suspected of carrying arms had turned back. Additionally, U.S. leaders had to assess the meaning and implications of the downing of an Air Force U-2 over Cuba by a Soviet SA-2 missile on Saturday, October 27. The President and his advisors, particularly McNamara, fully expected that there would be further attacks on U.S. reconnaissance planes, which would have prompted air strikes against Cuban air defenses within a couple days.[361] The danger of an armed confrontation with Soviet or Cuban forces thus appeared to be much greater at the time than it does in retrospect.

U.S. Navy forces experienced a number of accidents during the Cuban Missile Crisis, but none of them cause a confrontation with soviet forces or otherwise interfered with the President's ability to manage the crisis. The USS Holder (DD 819) collided with USS Wasp (CVS 18) while refueling at sea on November 14, but damage to the ships was slight. The USS William C. Lawe (DD 763) was forced aground by heavy seas in the mouth of San Juan harbor, Puerto Rico, on November 17, suffering damage sufficient to keep it out of further quarantine operations. The Navy lost an F8U that crashed during a catapult launch and an A4D that caught fire in flight. USS Essex (CVS 9) lost two new SH-3 ASW helicopters due to an electrical malfunction, which prompted the Navy to ground all of its SH-3s until the problem was corrected. Rear Admiral Christiansen states that not having

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[361] "October 17 Meetings Transcript," pp. 66-71, 74, 78.

the SH-3s caused some difficulties in tracking Soviet submarines. An ASW torpedo was dropped on the flight deck of USS Essex while being loaded onto an aircraft, but did not explode. One of the Navy F8U-1P photographic reconnaissance planes was damaged when it struck an Albatross in flight. Navy F4H Phantoms intercepted (but did not fire on) an Air Force U-2 as it approached the USS Enterprise (CVAN 65) carrier group after flying over Cuba. Two Air Force planes supporting the Navy crashed during the crisis: on October 23 a C-135 loaded with ammunition crashed while landing at Guantanamo (causing a spectacular explosion and fire), and on October 27 an RB-47 crashed on takeoff from the Bahamas. Four Marines at Guantanamo were injured, two when they accidently entered a U.S. minefield and two who were wounded when they failed to respond properly to a sentry's challenge. The accident that created the greatest danger of a confrontation with Cuban forces occurred on November 6, when two Marines accidently crashed a pickup truck through the Guantanamo security fence and twenty feet into Cuban territory. The incident was witnessed by a Cuban military officer, but the Cubans did not interfere with recovery of the truck and did not file a protest.[362] These

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[362] "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 99-100, 108, 118; Christiansen, interview by author, February 3, 1988; Dickey, letter to author, April 20, 1988; Hayward, letter to author, February 17, 1988; Ecker, letter to author, March 19, 1988; Vice Admiral Kent L. Lee, Commander Carrier Air Group Six aboard USS Enterprise (CVAN 65), interview by

incidents are not unusual and most are typical peacetime accidents. None of them complicated the crisis.

In summary, the U.S. Navy conducted extensive operations during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The operations that had the most immediate impact on resolution of the crisis were the quarantine and ASW operations. Both of these operations were conducted largely in accordance with standard Navy procedures, but with certain key modifications to ensure that the supported the President's political objectives. The White House and the chain of command closely monitored quarantine and ASW operations when they involved encounters with Soviet ships or submarines, but did not attempt to exercise direct real-time control over operations at sea. The Navy conducted these operations in the manner prescribed by the President and there were no incidents with Soviet ships or submarines.

Findings

This section will review the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis to answer the eight reseach questions. The first question is to what degree were interactions between the forces of the two sides at the scene of the crisis the result of actions taken in accordance with mechanisms of indirect

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author, February 5, 1988; Rear Admiral Edward J. O'Donnell, Commander Naval Base Guantanamo, interview by author April 27, 1988.

control, rather than direct control by national leaders? The Kennedy Administration was clearly concerned about the danger of an incident with Soviet ships or submarines. The President and McNamara exercised a greater degree of control over U.S. Navy operations than had ever been attempted in the past. However, they primarily controlled naval operations through mechanisms of indirect control, particularly mission orders and rules of engagement, rather than through direct control. The President and McNamara retained authority certain crucial decisions, particularly retaliation against Cuban air defenses and the boarding of ships. Other than this, however, they exercised control by negation, rather than positive control, over Navy operations they felt were particularly sensitive.[363] The President could monitor operations at sea on HF/SSB radio in the White House Situation Room, therefore could intervene if he felt an encounter was getting out of hand. Less sensitive

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[363] Researchers have in the past been misled about the manner in which the President exercised control over naval operations because they focused only on top-level deliberations and decisionmaking without examining the rest of the chain of command. The EXCOMM was an only an advisory body for the President--it was not in the chain of command. The EXCOMM and its study groups discussed military and naval operations in numbing detail, but the President and McNamara did not attempt to control all of those details in the actual conduct of operations. For example, the boarding party that searched Marucla was guided by the Navy tactical publication NWIP 10-2, not by procedures worked out in the EXCOMM. Similarly, the mission orders and rules of engagement for the quarantine were drafted by CINCLANT and the CNO's staff, and the President and McNamara made only a few key changes to those orders and rules.

operations were not closely controlled, with methods of delegated control being used. Presidential orders were passed via the chain of command and neither the President nor McNamara ever gave orders directly to ships at sea.

The second question is were the forces of the two sides at the scene of the crisis tightly coupled with each other? The overall answer is yes, but the coupling was not as tight as might be expected given the seriousness of the crisis. The tightest coupling was between U.S. Navy ASW forces and Soviet submarines, followed closely by coupling between the Quarantine force and Soviet merchant ships. In both cases, however, Khrushchev's decision not to challenge the quarantine dampened the interactions between the two sides. The Soviet submarines were not attempting to force their way through U.S. naval forces to get to Cuba, they were attempting to return home unmolested. The only Soviet ships that approached the quarantine line were those that the U.S. would have no reason to take into custody. As Admiral Dennison relates in his oral history, the quarantine was a success without ever having been tested.[364] Interactions between U.S. and Cuban forces were also dampened by the efforts that leaders on both sides made to avoid provocations. In this regard the Cuban Missile Crisis was similar to the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis: although significant U.S.

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[364] Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 427.

forces were operating in close proximity to the adversary's forces, tactical-level interactions were dampened by the caution and restraint shown by both sides.

The third question is were the forces of the two sides being used by their national leaders as a political instrument in the crisis? President Kennedy clearly was using the U.S. armed forces to convey political signals to Khrushchev during the crisis. The President and McNamara actively sought out ways to reinforce the signals being sent to the Soviets, such as by modifying Navy ASW procedures to support the political objectives of the quarantine. Khrushchev, on the other hand, may have used military forces for political signalling, but did not do so as clearly as President Kennedy. Khrushchev was probably avoiding signals of hostile intent by not placing Soviet forces at full alert, recalling freighters carrying arms, and recalling the three submarines in the Atlantic. However, there is insufficient evidence to establish this conclusively. Shooting down an American U-2 over Cuba on October 27 certainly sent the wrong signal to the United States, but this action may not have been authorized in the Kremlin. Cuba placed its armed forces on alert, but avoided provocatory actions during the crisis. This was probably intended to avoid giving the United States a pretext for invading the island. Thus, all three of the participants in the crisis used their military forces for political signalling.

The answers to these first three questions suggest that conditions necessary for stratified interaction were present in the Cuban Missile Crisis. Although the President sought to maintain close control of military operations he relied heavily on methods of delegated control and communications problems constrained his ability to effectively exercise direct control. In certain operations there was tight coupling between the forces of the two sides. Both sides used their forces as a political instrument under conditions of acute crisis. Interactions occurred at the tactical level that were not directly controlled by American leaders. The President did not directly control any of the ASW prosecutions or the boarding of the Marucla (other than to order it to occur). Navy forces encountered Cuban air and naval forces on several occasions without the President or McNamara controlling the interactions. The President's attention was focused on a very small portion of the overall operations that were in progress. The stratified interaction model of international crises, in which interactions evolve in separate, semi-independent sequences at the political, strategic and tactical levels, offers a good description of Soviet-American interactions in the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The fourth question is did crisis interactions at the tactical level become decoupled from the strategy being pursued by national leaders? Despite the vast scale of operations that were conducted and the intensity of the interactions that took place, decoupling was relatively rare during the Cuban Missile Crisis. There were no serious instances of decoupling involving naval forces.[365] A review of the seven potential causes of decoupling reveals that there were relatively few opportunities for decoupling to occur. The potential cause of decoupling that was most prominent in the crisis was communications problems. Despite the advances that had been made in communications technology, the effort to exercise close control over large-scale operations seriously overloaded and degraded U.S. communications systems. These communications problems did not cause serious decoupling because only a very small portion of U.S. forces were in contact with adversary forces and because attention had been paid to the guidance contained mechanisms of indirect control, so that U.S. forces would act as the President desired when he could not control their actions.

The second potential cause of decoupling, a fast-paced tactical environment, was not a major problem during the

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[365] There was at least one instance of decoupling involving the Air Force. An Air Force U-2 strayed over the Soviet Union on October 27, prompting the Soviets and Americans to scramble fighters--an incident decoupled from Presidential control. If, as has been alleged, the Strategic Air Command transmitted its readiness reports for the DEFCON 2 alert in the clear without the President and McNamara knowing what they were doing, that would have been another instance of decoupling. See Sagan, p. 108.

crisis. There were no fast-paced engagements. ASW operations--the most dangerous Soviet-American tactical interactions during the crisis--are particularly slow and tedious, providing ample opportunity for disengagement. Similarly, the intercept and boarding of merchant ships takes place at a leisurely pace and is relatively easy to control. Fast-paced engagements, such as air combat and sea battles fought with tactical aircraft and cruise missiles, never arose. In retrospect this appears to have been a key factor in the success of the President's crisis management efforts--opening with operations that were inherently slow-paced. The President probably knew intuitively that this was an advantage of a blockade, but it was not an explicit consideration in the decision.

President Kennedy and Secretary of Defense McNamara also sought to avoid three of the other potential causes of decoupling: ambiguous or ambivalent orders, tactically inappropriate orders, and inappropriate guidance in mechanisms of indirect control. This is a striking contrast with the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis, when the Navy did not have clear guidance on whether or not it could defend the offshore islands when the crisis erupted. By tailoring certain key guidance contained in mission orders (OPORDs) and rules of engagement to support the President's political objectives, the President and McNamara avoided the problem of inappropriate guidance in mechanisms of indirect control.

McNamara did not attempt to rewrite Navy tactical doctrine, but did impose certain requirements and limitations on the Navy. The most important innovation, the special submarine surfacing signals, were devised in conjunction with the Navy. By not attempting to exercise positive direct control of operations while they were in progress, the President and McNamara largely avoided the problem of tactically inappropriate orders. The method of control they used--control by negation--only required that orders be given if a Navy commander embarked on a course of action that they opposed.

The final potential cause of decoupling, unauthorized actions by military commanders, did not occur during the crisis. Contrary to the prevailing myth, Navy ASW operations were not conducted without the President's knowledge and authority, and did not violate the spirit of EXCOMM policy. No Soviet submarines were depth charged. The fact that no unauthorized actions occurred is even somewhat surprising. As will be discussed below, there was resentment among many Navy (and Air Force) Officers to the close attention that the President and McNamara paid to military operations. Thus, in summary, the various potential causes of decoupling either were not present during the crisis or did not have a serious adverse effect on the President's ability to manage the crisis.

The fifth question is did national leaders and on-scene commanders hold different perceptions of the vulnerability of on-scene forces to pre-emption and the need to strike first in the event of an armed clash? Although the JCS remained committed to the air strike option as its preferred course of action until Khrushchev agreed on October 28 to remove Soviet offensive missiles from Cuba, this does not reflect differences in threat perceptions. Rather, it reflects differences of opinion over whether or not the quarantine would be sufficient to compel Khrushchev to remove the missiles that were already in Cuba. Even President Kennedy was skeptical that it would work, but decided to give it a try before resorting to force. The primary area in which there appear to have been stratified threat perceptions, that is, on-scene commanders at the tactical level holding threat perceptions different from those held by decisionmakers at the political level, was in the area of ASW. Navy commanders at sea were more concerned about the Soviet submarine threat than were senior military and civilian leaders in Washington. However, the differences were not extreme and the President and McNamara were also concerned about the Soviet submarine threat.[366]

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[366] Admiral Griffin, Vice Admiral Houser, Vice Admiral Caldwell, and Rear Admiral Shepard stated that there was not great concern for the Soviet submarine threat in Washington. However, Admiral Anderson, Admiral Sharp, and rear Admiral Wylie state that there were such concerns. Griffin, letter to author, April 6, 1988; Houser, interview by author, February 11, 1988; Shepard, interview by author, February 10, 1988; Anderson, interview by author, January 25, 1988; Sharp, letter to author, February 24, 1988; Wylie, letter to author, April 13, 1988. President Kennedy and McNamara were

There was recognition at all levels that for several reasons, including that fact that submarines were to be stopped and boarded under the quarantine, the Navy would have to conduct intense ASW operations.

The one other area in which threat perceptions were stratified was the Cuban air and naval threat to U.S. Navy ships. Navy commanders were particularly concerned about the threat from Cuban Komar missile boats.[367] There is little mention of this threat in available EXCOMM records. Perceptions of the threat from Cuban aircraft were mixed, not following any pattern. Admiral Anderson and Admiral Dennison appear to have been most concerned about the Cuban air threat, Admiral Ward was not overly concerned about it. According to Admiral Ward, however, the CNO was flexible on this point during the October 20 JCS meeting.[368] Among

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concerned about the Soviet submarine threat. See Robert Kennedy, 61-62, 69-70; Sorenson, pp. 705, 710. Admiral Rivero, Vice Admiral Houser, Vice Admiral Caldwell, Vice Admiral Hayward, Vice Admiral Stroh and the CINCLANT report on the crisis state that Task Force and Task Group Commanders at sea were concerned about the Soviet submarine threat. Rivero, letter to author, March 10, 1988; Houser, interview by author, February 11, 1988; Caldwell, letter to author, March 14, 1988; Hayward, letter to author, February 17, 1988; Stroh, letter to author, February 18, 1988; "CINCLANT Historical Account," pp. 116, 121-22, 146.

[367] Lassell, letter to author, May 11, 1988; Brady, letter to author, April 21, 1988; Magee, letter to author, May 12, 1988; Wissman, letter to author, March 4, 1988; "CINCLANT Historical Account," p. 112.

[368] Anderson, interview by author, January 25, 1988; Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 424; Ward, "Diary," pp. 4-6.

commanders at sea, only those patrolling near Cuba in the Florida Strait were particularly concerned about the Cuban air threat. Thus, while perceptions of the Cuban air and naval threat were mixed, they were not stratified.

The sixth question is, when tactical-level interactions become decoupled, what factors inhibit escalation dynamics from occurring at the tactical level and being transmitted upward to the strategic and political levels of interaction? The Cuban Missile Crisis does not help to answer this question because there were no instances of decoupled interaction sequences. The decoupling that did occur was minor and did not generate sustained interaction sequences beyond Presidential control. President Kennedy's decision to open with relatively slow-paced naval operations, Khrushchev's early decision not to challenge the quarantine, and Castro's decision not to provoke the United States were the factors that determined the nature of the tactical-level interactions. There was immediate disengagement in the one instance that weapons were fired at a U.S. Navy unit: When Cuban anti-aircraft guns fired at Navy reconnaissance jets on October 27, the unarmed Navy planes simply left the area. Navy ASW forces trailed Soviet submarines for days without escalation by either side. In effect, then, escalation was avoided by the tactical environment having been structured in such a manner as to prevent clashes from occurring in the first place. Although this was what President Kennedy had in mind when he selected the quarantine over other military options, the outcome was due to decisions made in Moscow and Havana as well as in Washington.

The seventh question is did actions taken with military forces send inadvertent signals to either adversaries or friends, and did inadvertent military incidents occur that affected efforts to manage the crisis? There were two instances of U.S. naval forces sending inadvertent signals of hostility: the first was when a Soviet merchant ship captain mistook a Navy patrol plane's high-powered search light (flashed for photographs) for an attack on his ship, and the second was a Soviet merchant ship captain's complaint that he had been threatened by a Navy destroyer inspecting MRBMs on his deck. Although the Soviet Government filed protests over these incidents, it did not interpret them as deliberate indications of hostile intentions on the part of the United States.

There was only one inadvertent military incident serious enough to have affected the President's efforts to manage the crisis: the Air Force U-2 that strayed over the Soviet Union on October 27. This apparently annoyed Khrushchev, who complained about the incident to President Kennedy, but otherwise did not have a major impact on the crisis. There were no serious inadvertent military incidents involving naval forces. The most serious incident was the Marine pickup truck that crashed through the fence at Guantanamo into Cuban territory. A Cuban officer watched patiently, and probably in amusement, as the wayward truck was dragged back into the American base. There is a remote possibility that a Navy PDC might have contributed to the problems that kept two of the Soviet submarines on the surface, but the Soviets never filed a protest claiming that such an incident had occurred. The lack of incidents is somewhat surprising, given the tremendous scope of United States military operations during the crisis, and may not be a reliable indicator of what to expect in future crises.

The U-2 incident and Soviet protests of incidents involving their merchant ships illustrate another feature of the Cuban Missile Crisis: communications between the two sides were used to prevent incidents from giving rise to misperceptions. Military moves were not the only means of signalling intentions available to President Kennedy, he had several other channels for delivering formal and informal messages to Khrushchev.[369] Because Kennedy and Khrushchev were exchanging communications frequently during the crisis, they could wait, send a protest, and assess the implications of an isolated incident, rather than immediately reacting to it. But these communications were not perfect: The United States appears not to have asked for or received an

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[369] Hilsman, pp. 216-17; Holsti, pp. 187-92.

explanation for the shooting down of a U-2 on October 27. This was an important incident that caused apprehensions concerning Khrushchev's motives and willingness to resolve the crisis peacefully. Yet its implications remained ambiguous. The incident probably would have had a greater impact on U.S. policy than it did were it not for Khrushchev's October 28 letter accepting President Kennedy's terms for ending the crisis. Nevertheless, the availability of formal and informal communications channels between the two superpowers appears to have moderated the use of military forces for political signaling by allowing diplomatic rather than military responses to military incidents.

The eighth question is did any of the three tensions between political and military considerations arise during the crisis? All three of the tensions arose, but only one was severe. Tensions between political considerations and military considerations primarily arose from the fundamental decision to impose a quarantine on offensive arms rather than immediately launch an air strike against the Soviet missiles sites or invade Cuba. The JCS never wavered from its advocacy of the air strike option. There was also concern that the President's strategy of applying military force in graduated increments would increase the difficulty of carrying out the air strike or invasion options by alerting the Cubans--losing the tactical and strategic advantage of surprise.[370] Further, tensions arose between the military consideration of protecting U.S. forces against a sudden attack by Cuban or Soviet forces, and the political consideration of avoiding military moves that appeared to threaten an immediate effort to achieve a military solution to the crisis. Captain Carmichael, who observed the crisis intimately from his post in Flag Plot, states that "friction was generated when the military considered it prudent to take precautionary measures, assuming that the Soviets would shoot if the point of no return was reached."[371] The tension that this generated has been explained by Eliot A. Cohen:

> The events of October 1962 created considerable tension between military men seeking to protect those under their command, in the event of an outbreak of war, and politicians seeking to give the other side time to think and give in. Had men in fact died as a result, had ships sunk or airplanes fallen by the score, the crisis in civil-military relations would have taken a more dramatic turn, one in which, I suspect, civilian leaders would have accommodated commanders far more than they actually did.[372]

This captures the essence of the problem, but must be qualified by three observations. First, the military was concerned with protecting their men in the event of any outbreak of fighting, no matter how small, not just in the event of war.

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[370] Sharp, letter to author, February 24, 1988.

[371] Carmichael, letter to author, March 8, 1988.

[372] Cohen, p. 6.

Second, as this case study has shown, civilian leaders accommodated military commanders to a much greater degree than past accounts have acknowledged. The rules of engagement issued for the quarantine were not significantly different from normal peacetime rules and did not infringe upon a commander's right of self-defense. The only operational area in which the President deliberately denied the military any authority to take action in self defense was in the case of Cuban air defenses firing on U.S. reconnaissance aircraft. This was not a policy innovation created for the Cuban Missile Crisis. The distinction between self defense and retaliation was well-established in U.S. rules of engagement. President Kennedy simply defined attacks on Cuban air defenses to be an act of retaliation that he would control, rather than an act of self defense that the military could take on its own authority. President Eisenhower had done the same thing in the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis, allowing hot pursuit of Communist Chinese aircraft but not attacks on their mainland bases.

Third, records of EXCOMM meetings reveal that President Kennedy and Secretary McNamara were sympathetic to the military's concern with protecting its men. After a U-2 was shot down on October 27, the danger of further attacks and the loss of additional pilots was discussed. McNamara argued the military perspective forcefully, contending that further attacks on U.S. planes were likely and that it would be necessary to destroy the Cuban air defense system if this happened.[373] This is why tensions between political considerations and military considerations were not severe during the Cuban Missile Crisis: The President and McNamara tried to understand the implications of their interventions in military operations and attempted to weigh potential military costs against the political objectives they sought.

Tensions arose between performance of crisis missions and readiness to perform wartime missions. In mid-October, only days before Soviet offensive missiles were discovered in Cuba, a JCS study concluded that execution of CINCLANT contingency plans for the invasion of Cuba would have the following consequences:

> a. Preclude simultaneous, (D-5 to D+2), reinforcement of either CINCEUR [Commander in Chief U.S. Forces Europe] or CINCPAC using troop carrier or MATS [Military Air Transport Service] aircraft.
>
> b. Inhibit for 5 to 7 days capability for conduct of Berlin airlift contingency plans by withdrawing all C-130 aircraft from EUCOM [U.S. European Command].
>
> c. Make inadequate for reinforcement of CINCEUR the available logistic support units for filling the port package [equipment and supplies delivered by ship].
>
> d. Deplete critical logistic support units of Army forces remaining in CONUS [Continental U.S.].[374]

During the crisis all the forces called for in the CINCLANT contingency plans for invasion of Cuba, plus additional

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[373] "October 27 Meetings Transcript," pp. 66-71, 74, 78.

[374] "CINCLANT Historical Account," p. 45.

force added to the plans at the last moment, were mobilized and began logistic and training preparations for invasion. The problems described by JCS thus became a consideration during the crisis: Preparations for invasion of Cuba degraded the ability of the United States to respond to Soviet moves in Europe, particularly against Berlin. The only reason that this did not generate severe tensions was that the political-military situation in other theaters, including Europe was relatively quiet. Military men were not overly concerned about the negative consequences of the preparations for invasion of Cuba because there was no immediate need for the forces elsewhere.[375] This situation would have changed drastically if the Soviets had moved against Berlin or Turkey in response to a U.S. move against Cuba, which justifies the President's concern for such a Soviet move.[376]

Tension arose between the need for top-level control of military operations and the need for on-scene flexibility and initiative. This was the most severe political-military

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[375] Sharp, letter to author, February 24, 1988; Caldwell, letter to author, March 14, 1988.

[376] Rear Admiral Shepard related to the author a statement the President made to the Joint Chiefs after the crisis: "We had the upper hand in Cuba, but we did not have the upper hand in other theaters. The Russians might have taken action against Berlin or Turkey." Shepard, interview by author, February 10, 1988. Also see CIA, SNIE 11-19-62, p. 9; Robert Kennedy, pp. 58, 60, 98; "October 27 Meetings Transcript," pp. 54-55; Sagan, p. 111.

tension during the crisis. The Cuban Missile Crisis marked a turning point in American civil-military relations and in the evolution of U.S. command and control doctrine. Vice Admiral Houser described the significance ofthe crisis: "It was the major turning point from the World War II type of operations to modern operations. It was a watershed. During World War II and the Korean War there was military command only, no control. But after Cuba civilians would exercise both command and control."[377] Vice Admiral Caldwell made the same point when asked the most important lesson of the crisis: "That in the nuclear age the civilian leadership will quickly and actively intervene in a military operation of any seriousness. We did not understand this prior to the crisis, but afterward began to structure the Command/Control system to accommodate this process."[378] This was the fundamental origins of the tension: a sudden attempt to impose radically new methods of direct control on a command system set up for delegated methods of control, without prior planning, consideration of the implications, or even consultation with the military.

The Navy, with its tradition of granting autonomy to commanders at sea, reacted most strongly to the Kennedy Administration's efforts at closely controlling military

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[377] Houser, interview by author, February 11, 1988.

[378] Caldwell, letter to author, March 14, 1988.

operations. Admiral Griffin has described the crux of the problem: "What we [the Navy] wanted was to get clear orders as to what was wanted [by civilian authorities]. Then we could carry out those orders. McNamara wanted to know in detail how each function was to be accomplished. It was not a very good situation."[379] Admiral Anderson, at the interface between between civilian authorities and the Navy chain of command, took the lead in preventing what he perceived to be unreasonable civilian interference in naval operations. On October 23, the CNO, after learning that the White House rather than the Quarantine Force Commander would decide which ships were to be boarded, sent McNamara a memorandum stating that "from now on I do not intend to interfere with Dennison or either of the Admirals on the scene."[380] This reflects Admiral Anderson's determination to "prevent any intrusion by McNamara or anybody else in the direct operations of any ship or squadron or anything of the sort."[381] This was the heart of the problem: a clash between the President's desire to maintain control over events and the Navy's desire to operate on the basis of its traditional philosophy of command, in which commanders at sea are delegated substantial authority.

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[379] Griffin, letter to author, April 6, 1988. Also see Chew, "Reminiscences," pp. 317-18.

[380] "CNO Historical Narrative," pp. 39-40.

[381] Anderson, "Reminiscences," p. 550.

Most senior Navy Officers deeply resented the new civilian attention to the details of naval operations, which they viewed as "micromanagement." McNamara would bear the brunt of their resentment. Admiral Anderson, whose relationship with McNamara was notoriously poor, stated "I just resent the involvement of these lower-level--well, some of them are high-level, the Secretary of Defense--civilian staff officers getting involved in military affairs."[382] When asked his most prominent memory of the crisis, Admiral Sharp replied, "Robert McNamara dashing into Flag Plot and demanding instant action that was often not possible. For example, wanting ships to be at certain places at a time when their max speed would not permit. He was unreasonable."[383] Vice Admiral Riley, like many senior Navy Officers, questioned McNamara's competence for controlling military operations: "How could any civilian, no matter how successful he might have been in his line of business before he got appointed Secretary of Defense, have the competence to do this? The answer is that he didn't. He didn't have that competence."[384] Only Vice Admiral Houser offered a comment on McNamara that was even faintly positive: "My own view of McNamara, which a lot of my friends didn't share,

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[382] Anderson, "Reminiscences," p. 553.

[383] Sharp, letter to author, February 24, 1988.

[384] Riley, "Reminiscences," p. 754.

was that McNamara was the best Secretary of Defense we ever had, but the worst Secretary of War we ever had."[385] The second half of this assessment reflects a widespread attitude toward McNamara, that he was incompetent at controlling military operations. McNamara, the admirals felt, was trying to run naval operations the way he would manage a Ford assembly line, but without the experience necessary to do so and with no respect for those who did have the requisite experience.

If McNamara was resented, his civilian aides were despised. Navy admirals commonly referred to them as "Junior Field Marshals" and a variety of less polite expressions. Even General Taylor was suspect because he had been brought out of retirement to serve as JCS Chairman. One admiral who worked closely with General Taylor described him as a "boot licking sycophant" and a "yes man" for the Kennedy Administration. The records of the EXCOMM meetings reveal that this is not a fair assessment, but it was their perceptions that mattered.

Although there was widespread resentment toward McNamara, the admirals who ran the quarantine did not feel unreasonably burdened by civilian authorities and understood the need for close control. Admiral Dennison, referring to President Kennedy, stated that "he was perfectly marvelous

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[385] Houser, interview by author, February 11, 1988.

and I never got a call from the White House during the entire operation. He let me alone."[386] The Admiral's only complaint was about officials in Washington attempting to use his already overloaded radio circuits. Admiral Ward describes well the reasons for close civilian control of the quarantine:

> We were not there to sink ships or shoot anyone. Our mission was to accomplish a political objective. . . . Everything we did had political impact. If we had sunk a Soviet ship, we would have started World War III. We could have. Everything that we did we reported directly by voice telephone [HF/SSB radio], sometimes through a scrambler, to the Pentagon, which was monitored also in the White House war room. For the first time we asked instructions on whether or not we should stop a Soviet ship known to be headed our way and the decision was made at the political level because it was a political decision rather than a military one.[387]

Similarly, Admiral Rivero, Amphibious Force Commander during the crisis, supported the close civilian control: "Very tight control of the Quarantine Force was probably appropriate since only the people in the White House and the ExComm knew the meaning of the signals being exchanged between Kennedy and Khrushchev. But this was an exceptional situation, more political than military in nature."[388] The fact that Navy commanders who did not have to work directly with McNamara felt less resentment and better understood the

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[386] Dennison, "Reminiscences," p. 421.

[387] Ward, "Reminiscences," p. 199.

[388] Rivero, letter to author, March 10, 1988.

President's political objectives strongly suggests that much of the friction and anger visible in Washington was generated by the McNamara's personality, management style, and personal attitudes, rather than by the underlying policy conflicts. This largely explains the infamous argument between McNamara and Admiral Anderson the evening of October 24. Their clash arose over a policy issue: the question of how closely operations at sea were to be controlled. Admiral Anderson had thrown down the gauntlet the previous day with his memorandum to McNamara stating there would be no more interference with the commanders at sea. McNamara had spent the day in a tense EXCOMM meeting, and had been tasked by the President to closely monitor the quarantine operations. Under such circumstances, a clash between these two strong-willed men was to be expected. However, their argument reveals much more about personalities clashing under the stress of a crisis than it does about organizational processes. Admiral Anderson did not disobey or attempt to circumvent any orders from the President or McNamara during the crisis. The CNO objected strongly to some of their decisions and to what he viewed as unwarranted intrusion into naval matters, but did not defy their authority.

Because of the emphasis on direct civilian control of military operations, civilian authorities did not keep military leaders adequately informed of the overall U.S.

political-diplomatic strategy for resolving the crisis. Admiral Anderson makes this point in his oral history:

> Admittedly, from the Joint Chief's point of view, some of the sensitive negotiations, exchanges of information between President Kennedy and the White House and the Soviet Union, were not filtering down to the Chiefs. That was so tightly held--maybe they gave it to Taylor and he didn't pass it on down. Maybe he was told not to pass it on down. But there was a inadequacy, in my opinion, in that flow of information to the chiefs.[389]

Other admirals share his opinion. Admiral Griffin, who attended JCS meetings with the CNO, states that "One of the difficulties in going into a great amount of detail about some of these things is the secrecy with which the White House held them. Even the Chiefs would be uninformed about certain things. I don't think that the Chiefs were being really kept up to date on the negotiations that were going on in New York, and from the White House to Moscow."[390] The President could have had several reasons for not informing the Joint Chiefs about political efforts to resolve the crisis--particularly a desire to not compromise sensitive negotiations.

The important point is that by not informing the JCS of political-diplomatic efforts at resolving the crisis, the President risked defeating his efforts to ensure that military operations supported his political objectives. The

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[389] Anderson, "Reminiscences," p. 549.

[390] Griffin, "Reminiscences," p. 555.

Chiefs did not need to know the details of sensitive communications with the Soviets to understand the President's diplomatic objectives. Vice Admiral Houser and Captain Carmichael both stated that the Chiefs did not appear to understand the President's political strategy or the escalation concerns of civilian leaders.[391] Such an understanding might have helped them to anticipate operational problems that could have interfered with the President's crisis management strategy.

In summary, the stratified interaction model accurately describes Soviet-American interaction during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Despite the scale of U.S. military and naval operations and the intensity of tactical-level interactions at sea, there were no serious instances of decoupled interactions involving naval forces. The pattern was one of parallel stratified interactions: tactical level nteractions not directly controlled by political leaders, but generally supporting their strategy for resolving the crisis. Positive direct control was exercised only over the decision to board merchant ships and the decision to retaliate against Cuban air defenses. There were no serious incidents between U.S. naval forces and Soviet or Cuban forces. The most serious political-military tension was over centralized control of naval operations.

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[391] Houser, interview by author, February 11, 1988; Carmichael, letter to author, March 8, 1988.

The 1967 Arab-Israeli War

The Third Arab-Israeli War erupted in June 1967 when Israel, after weeks of increasing tensions and provocative Arab military moves, launched pre-emptive attacks on Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. The United States sought to remain officially neutral in the conflict and to avert Soviet intervention on behalf of the Arab nations. The war was over in only six days after a string of successful Israeli offensives. The United States Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean Sea was used to deter Soviet intervention in the conflict. The one major incident involving the U.S. Navy during the crisis--the Israeli attack on the USS *Liberty* (AGTR 5)--will be discussed in a separate case study in Chapter VIII.

Background

Tensions between Israel and neighboring Arab countries had been rising for years due to the Syrian-Jordanian effort to divert Jordan river water away from Israel, Palestinian terrorist attacks on Israel, Israeli reprisal raids into Jordan and Syria, and artillery duels along the Israeli-Syrian border. Three events in May 1967 escalated these tensions to the brink of war: The United Nations Secretary General, caving in to Egyptian demands, ordered withdrawal of the U.N. peacekeeping force on the Israeli-Egyptian border and Egyptian troops began pouring into the Sinai;

Egypt announced its intention to blockade the Strait of Tiran controlling access to the Israeli port of Eilat, an act of war under international law; and an Egyptian-Jordanian mutual defense pact was signed bringing Jordan into the Egyptian-Syrian joint military command. These moves appeared to confirm Israeli fears of imminent attack and Israel decided to pre-empt.[392]

Israel struck early on 5 June with devastating air strikes on Egyptian air fields, followed later in the day by attacks on Syrian, Jordanian and Iraqi air fields. Israeli army units invaded the Sinai the morning of 5 June, reaching the Suez canal three days later. Israel attacked Jordan on 5 June, occupying all of Jerusalem and the West Bank in two days. Although action on the Syrian front was limited to artillery duels and three small Syrian probes, Israel decided late on 7 June to attack the Golan Heights but then delayed the assault due to Arab acceptance of the U.N. ceasefire. By the morning of 8 June Egyptian defenses in the Sinai had collapsed and Jordan had been knocked out of the war. There had been only sporadic fighting on the Syrian front during the first four days of the war, primarily two Syrian probes that were easily repulsed by the Israelis. On June 9 Israel attacked Syria in the Golan

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[392] See, for example, Theodore Draper, Israel and World Politics: Roots of the Third Arab-Israeli War (New York: Viking Press, 1967), pp. 85-115; Nadav Safran Israel: The Embattled Ally (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1978), pp.

Heights despite Syrian acceptance of the U.N. ceasefire resolution. The next day, the sixth day of the war, Israel achieved the last of its military objectives against Syria and the fighting stopped.[393]

Political-Strategic Context

Preoccupied with the war in Vietnam, the Johnson Administration was slow to react to the rapidly increasing tensions in the Middle East. In late May and early June the United States had attempted to organize an international naval force to contest the Egyptian blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba, as part of its political efforts to avert an Israeli decision for war.[394] A primary Johnson Administration

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381-413; Michael Brecher, Decisions in Crisis: Israel, 1967 and 1973 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 51-76.

[393] On the 1967 War, see Edgar O'Ballance, The Third Arab-Israeli War (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1972); Randolf S. Churchill and Winston S. Churchill, The Six Day War (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967); Peter Young, The Israeli Campaign, 1967 (London: William Kimber, 1967); Safran, pp. 240-56; Brecher, pp. 91-170.

[394] On U.S. policy immediately prior to the crisis, see "The Situation in the Middle East: Statement by President Johnson," May 23, 1967, U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, A Select Chronology and Background Documents Relating to the Middle East, First Revised Edition (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969. Cited hereafter as Foreign Relations Committee, Select Chronology), pp. 211-13; Lyndon B. Johnson, The Vantage Point: Perspectives on the Presidency, 1963-69 (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), pp. 290-96. On efforts to break the Aqaba blockade, see "U.S. Seeks Backing on an Aqaba Test," New York Times, June 1, 1967, p. 1; "U.S. Drafts Plan to Assert Rights of Aqaba Passage," New York

concern was that the Soviet Union would exploit the crisis to increase its influence in the middle east at the expense of the United States. United States objectives in the crisis were to limit the scope the fighting in the Middle East and quickly bring it to a halt, prevent the Soviet Union from intervening militarily on behalf of the Arab nations, and avoid alienating the Arab world.[395]

The U.S. strategy during the Six Day War was to act through the U.N. Security Council to achieve an early ceasefire, pressure Israel to accept the ceasefire and limit its military objectives, and prevent Soviet military intervention through deterrent military moves and diplomacy. The United States attempted to portray a neutral stance without officially declaring itself to be neutral. This failed to placate the Arab nations, which declared an embargo on oil shipments to the United States. United States diplomatic efforts favored Israel, but were not a grant of unlimited support. The United States supported the U.N. ceasefire

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Times, June 1, 1967, p. 1. Also see William B. Quandt, Decade of Decisions: American Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1967-1976 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 37-59; Steven L. Spiegel, "The U.S. Approach to Conflict Resolution in the Middle East," in Gabriel Ben-Dor and David B. Dewitt, eds., Conflict Management in the Middle East (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1987), pp. 166-67.

[395] Johnson, pp. 288-300; "U.S. Seeks to Hold a Neutral Stance," New York Times, June 6, 1967, p. 1; "U.N. Impasse Ends," New York Times, June 7, 1967, p. 1. Also see Quandt, pp. 60-63; Howe, pp. 90-94.

resolution and called on Israel to adhere to it. The United States specifically tried to prevent the Israeli attack on Syria.[396] President Johnson used the Soviet-American "hot line" to communicate with Soviet leaders during the crisis, the first use of the system for its intended purpose.[397] American efforts were thus primarily political and diplomatic, and military forces had only a small active role.

Soviet objectives in the crisis were to prevent its clients in the Middle East from suffering catastrophic defeats and to expand its influence among Arab nations at the expense of the United States. As it became apparent that Israel was scoring a major triumph, the Soviet objective shifted to limiting the extent of Arab defeats and the reducing the potential erosion of Soviet prestige and influence in the Middle East.[398]

The Soviet strategy prior to the war was to support a rapid military build-up in Syria and Egypt and to encourage

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[396] Ibid; Secretary of State Dean Rusk, "News Briefing at the White House," Department of State Bulletin 56 (June 26, 1967): 950.

[397] "Johnson Pleased by Gains on Truce," New York Times, June 9, 1967, p. 1; Hugh Sidey, "Over the hot line--the Middle East," Life, June 16, 1967, p. 24B; Johnson, pp. 298-302; Howe, pp. 91-92, 103.

[398] Ulam, pp. 732-34; S. Niel MacFarlane, "The Soviet Union and Conflict Management in the Middle East," in Gabriel Ben-Dor and David B. Dewitt, eds., Conflict Management in the Middle East (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1987), pp. 187-207. For a critique of Soviet policy in 1967, see Khrushchev, Last Testament, pp. 344-46.

Egypt and Syria to adopt a belligerent stance toward Israel. There are indications that the Soviets may even have helped provoke the war by spreading rumors of imminent Israeli attacks. The Soviet strategy during the war was to provide strong diplomatic support for the Arab nations. When war broke out the Soviet Government immediately condemned Israeli "aggression" and demanded that Israeli forces withdraw from Arab territory as a condition for a ceasefire. As the extent of the Arab losses became apparent, however, the Soviets dropped the withdrawal demand and supported an unconditional immediate ceasefire in order to forestall further Arab defeats. Soviet public pronouncements remained solidly pro-Arab throughout the crisis.[399] Anthony R. Wells concludes the Soviets took four military actions in support of their crisis diplomacy: reinforcing their Mediterranean squadron; shadowing Western aircraft carriers; mounting a airlift and sealift to resupply the Arabs; and threatening direct military intervention in the Middle East, probably with airborne troops.[400] On June 10, the day after Israel invaded Syria, the Soviets sent a threat over the hot line to take "necessary actions,

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[399] "Moscow Demands Israel Quit Egypt," New York Times, June 6, 1967, p. 1; "U.N. Impasse Ends," New York Times, June 7, 1967, p. 1; Howe, pp. 114-116.

[400] Anthony R. Wells, "The June 1967 Arab-Israeli War," in Bradford Dismukes and James McConnell, eds., Soviet Naval Diplomacy (New York: Pergamon Press, 1979), p. 166.

including military" unless Israel unconditionally halted military action in the next few hours. The Soviets also sent a blunt warning to Israel, which they revealed in the U.N. Security Council. However, the threat was not backed by overt military moves signalling an intent to carry it out in the near future.[401] The Soviet role in the war thus consisted primarily of diplomatic activity, backed by low-level signalling with military forces.

In summary, the United States and the Soviet Union had limited objectives in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, and both superpowers limited their roles primarily to political and diplomatic activities. However, both superpowers used their naval forces in the Mediterranean for political signalling, as will be discussed below. Unlike the Cuban Missile Crisis, which was a direct superpower crisis, the 1967 Arab-Israeli War was an indirect superpower crisis. In a direct superpower crisis the primary confrontation is between the United States and the Soviet Union. In an indirect superpower crisis the primary confrontation is between allies or clients of the United States and the Soviet Union. An indirect superpower crisis can be more difficult for the superpowers to manage because the outcome is heavily influenced by the decisions and actions of their clients.

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[401] Johnson, p. 302; Howe, pp. 104-6, 122. Also see Francis Fukuyama, "Nuclear Shadowboxing: Soviet Intervention Threats in the Middle East," Orbis 25 (Fall 1981): 583-84.

The superpowers can be put in the role of restraining, as well as supporting, their clients.

Command and Control

By 1967 the defense reorganization of 1958 had taken firm hold and the military chain of command ran from the President, to the Secretary of Defense, to the unified and specified commanders. The JCS no longer used the executive agent system. The unified commander responsible for Europe and the Mediterranean was United States Commander in Chief Europe (USCINCEUR), General Lyman L. Lemnitzer, U.S. Army, commander of all U.S. forces in the European Command (EUCOM). USCINCEUR was also Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), commanding all NATO forces in and immediately around Europe.

The Navy component commander under USCINCEUR was Commander in Chief U.S. Naval Forces Europe (CINCUSNAVEUR), Admiral John S. McCain, Jr., headquartered in London. Because CINCUSNAVEUR was a Navy command as well as a component of the unified command, Admiral McCain reported administratively direct to the CNO, Admiral David L. McDonald, as well as operationally to General Lemnitzer.[402]

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[402] This was not unique to CINCUSNAVEUR: component commands invariably are "dual-hatted" as administrative or geographic area commanders within their own services, as well as being operational commanders under a unified command. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, for example, CICNCAFLANT--CINCLANT's Air Force component commander--could

There were three naval commands under CINCUSNAVEUR concerned with operations in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. The most important was the Sixth Fleet, commanded by Vice Admiral William I. Martin (COMSIXTHFLT), embarked in USS Little Rock (CLG 4). The Sixth Fleet was also the NATO Striking Force Mediterranean. The other two commands were Commander Naval Forces Southern Europe (COMNAVSOUTH), headquartered in Naples, Italy, responsible for ASW operations in the Mediterranean, and Commander Middle East Force, responsible for U.S. naval forces in the Persian Gulf. Of these commands, the Sixth Fleet played the most important role in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

The United States had maintained a continuous naval presence in the Mediterranean since the end of World War II. Initially, this force was small, consisting only of two destroyer squadrons and some amphibious and support ships. In August 1946 the force was expanded and included the nearly constant presence of at least one attack carrier group. On February 12, 1950, U.S. Navy forces in the Mediterranean were designated the Sixth Fleet in recognition of the Mediterranean's strategic importance to NATO's southern flank.

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report directly to the Air Force Chief of Staff as well as to CINCLANT. There is an important reason for this: the service chain of command provides essential support services, such as spare parts and replacement personnel, and thus needs to be kept informed of the component command's status and requirements.

The Sixth Fleet consisted of several Task Forces, the most important of which was the Carrier Strike Force (Task Force 60). In the spring of 1967 TF 60 was commanded by Rear Admiral Laurence R. Geis, embarked in USS *America* (CVA 66), and consisted of two Task Groups. Task Group 60.1 consisted of the USS *America* (CVA 66) and six escorting destroyers. Task Group 60.2 consisted of the USS *Saratoga* (CVA 60), the cruiser USS *Galveston* (CLG 3), and four destroyers. The other Sixth Fleet Task Force that had a role in the crisis was the Amphibious Force (Task Force 61), consisting of an amphibious ready group with an embarked Marine battalion landing team (BLT), some 1,800 troops.

United States communications capabilities in 1967 had improved over 1962, but still did not enable the President to directly control ships at sea. The primary communications links to the Sixth Fleet were the fleet HF radioteletype broadcast and other HF channels from communications stations around the Mediterranean. Satellite communications had been introduced into the fleet on an experimental basis in 1963 and various prototype systems were being tested 9including limited operational use in the Vietnam war), but the Sixth Fleet was still relying on HF communications. The Sixth Fleet had HF/SSB voice radio communications with local communications stations and shore-based headquarters in southern Europe, but had no capability to speak directly with the Pentagon or the White House. Verbal orders from the White House could be sent to USCINCEUR via phone lines, but were then relayed to the Sixth Fleet via radioteletype.[403]

Although the White House sought to control the movements of the Sixth Fleet for political signalling, the chain of command was used for transmitting orders to the Sixth Fleet. President Johnson and McNamara did not attempt to give orders directly to ships at sea.[404] The White House Situation Room was unable to monitor Sixth Fleet operations real-time. The President and McNamara had to await verbal reports from USCINCEUR and CINCUSNAVEUR, or receipt of message operational reports (OPREPs), situation reports (SITREPs), and operational summaries (OPSUMs).

The only aspect of Sixth Fleet operations that was controlled by the White House was the general location of the Task Forces in the Mediterranean.[405] In addition to the

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[403] On U.S. comunications capabilities in 1973, see U.S. Congress, House Committee on Armed Services, Review of Department of Defense Worldwide Communications, Phase I, Hearings, 92nd Congress, 1st Session (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1971). Also see Blair, pp. 51-65; Carter, pp. 233-57; Richard G. Head, Frisco W. Short and Robert C. McFarlane, Crisis Resolution: Presidential Decision Making in the Mayaguez and Korean Confrontations (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1978), pp. 85-99.

[404] Rear Admiral J.C. Wylie, Deputy Commander in Chief U.S. Naval Forces Europe during the crisis, letter to author, March 28, 1988.

[405] Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, Commander in Chief Atlantic during the crisis, interview by author, February 9, 1988. Admiral Horacio Rivero, Vice CNO during the crisis, states there was close control "to the extent of the JCS

overall effort to signal the U.S. intention to stay out of the conflict, Sixth Fleet movements were used on at least three occasions (described below) to send specific political signals to the Soviet Union. However, Sixth Fleet movements generally were not under positive direct control. Rather, general geographic limits were placed on on the fleet's movements and control by negation was exercised--Vice Admiral Martin reported his actions up the chain of command, allowing the White House to alter politically inappropriate fleet movements.[406] There appear to have been no instances in which the President countermanded an order given by Vice Admiral Martin.

The President and Secretary of Defense did not use the mechanisms of indirect control to issue detailed operational guidance to the Sixth Fleet. USCINCEUR had contingency plans for a wide range of emergencies and hostilities, but

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directing COMSIXTHFLT to proceed to a certain latitude and longitude, or to operate not less than X miles from the coast." Rivero, letter to author, March 10, 1988. According to Vice Admiral Donald D. Engen, Commanding Officer of USS <u>America</u> (CVA 66) during the crisis, the movements and operations of the carriers were not closely controlled from Washington, other than a requirement that the carriers operate in the vicinity of specific points rather than being allowed to roam at will. Vice Admiral Donald D. Engen, letter to author, March 21, 1988. This restriction appears to have been imposed by the Navy chain of command in order to facilitate control of the carriers' movements in response to White House signalling efforts. It was a compromise between telling the carriers precisely what to do on a real-time basis and allowing them complete autonomy.

[406] Wylie, letter to author, March 28, 1988

no special contingency plans appear to have been issued specifically for the 1967 war.[407] The U.S. Government had been preparing plans for an international naval force to challenge the Egyptian blockade of the Strait of Tiran, but the outbreak of war halted efforts to organize the force. No special mission orders were issued for the crisis. Likewise, no special rules of engagement were issued for the crisis. The only special guidance was restrictions on how closely U.S. ships and aircraft could approach the coasts of Israel, Egypt, and Syria.[408] Other than this, the Sixth Fleet was governed by standing CINCUSNAVEUR peacetime rules of engagement.[409] The lack of attention to mechanisms of indirect control is not surprising given the short duration of the crisis and the relatively limited scope and intensity of the naval operations that were conducted during the crisis.

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[407] See the suggestive comments by Vice Admiral Martin and Rear Admiral Geis in "Admirals Cite Options," New York Times, June 1, 1967, p. 18.

[408] Admiral Moorer, interview by author, February 9, 1988; Wylie, letter to author, March 28, 1988; Engen, letter to author, March 21, 1988; "2nd Russian Ship Watches Carrier," New York Times, June 8, 1967, p. 14.

[409] This is evident in the orders given by COMSIXTHFLT in response to the attack on the Liberty. The rules of engagement guidance refers to the standing CINCUSNAVEUR rules issued prior to the crisis. See COMSIXTHFLT 081320Z JUN 67, naval message, June 6, 1967 (Unclassified. Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC); COMSIXTHFLT 081339Z JUN 67, naval message, June 6, 1967 (Declassified 1988. Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC).

Naval Operations

Soviet naval operations during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War attracted a great deal of attention among Western naval analysts because it marked the first significant employment of the Soviet navy in a crisis. As Anthony Wells observed, "The 1967 June War was a watershed in the evolution of Soviet naval diplomacy. It was the first occasion on which the Soviets utilized significant naval power in Third World coercive diplomacy."[410] Similarly, Bradford Dismukes suggests, based on the composition and number of Soviet ships deployed to the Mediterranean during the crisis, that "for the first time Soviet decision makers regarded the Navy as an important tool of their diplomacy and a quasi-credible deterrent threat to the employment of U.S. naval power."[411]

The Soviet Union had embarked on a program of naval expansion after the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis and had greatly increased its naval operations on the high seas. From mid-1964 onward the Soviet navy maintained a continuous presence in the Mediterranean. The average daily force level rose from five ships in 1964 to fifteen ships in 1966. In the first part of 1967 the Soviets normally had

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[410] Wells, p. 168.

[411] Bradford Dismukes, "Soviet Employment of Naval Power for Political Purposes, 1967-75," in Michael MccGwire and John McDonnell, eds., Soviet Naval Influence: Domestic and Foreign Dimensions (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977), p. 497.

five or six warships, a like number of submarines, and several support vessels in the Mediterranean. The Soviet Mediterranean Squadron (the Fifth Eskadra) was not unusually active, spending much time at anchor or in small-scale training exercises. However, the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron conducted close surveillance and aggressive intelligence collection against the Sixth Fleet, particularly its attack carriers, and conducted ASW exercises in which simulated U.S. Polaris submarines were hunted down. The Soviets also began using their navy more frequently for political purposes, making port visits to friendly countries and moving ships to the vicinity of hot spots.[412]

In early May 1967 the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron was conducting routine operations and was at a normal

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[412] F.M. Murphy, "The Soviet Navy in the Mediterranean," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 93 (March 1967): 38-44; Robert W. Herrick, Soviet Naval Strategy: Fifty Years of Theory and Practice (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1968), pp. 93, 110, 154-55; Melvin D. Blixt, "Soviet Objectives in the Eastern Mediterranean," Naval War College Review 21 (March 1969): 16-21; Walter Laqueur, The Struggle for the Middle East: The Soviet Union in the Mediterranean, 1958-1968 (New York: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 145-57; Gary G. Sick, "Russia and the West in the Mediterranean: Perspectives for the 1970's," Naval War College Review 22 (June 1970): 49-69; C.B. Joynt and O.M. Smolansky, Soviet Naval Policy in the Mediterranean, Research Monograph No. 3 (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University, Department of International Relations, July 1972), pp. 6-7, 15-16, 25-27; Norman Polmar, Soviet Naval Power: Challenge for the 1970s (New York: Crane, Russak, 1974), pp. 65-66; Jesse W. Lewis, The Strategic Balance in the Mediterranean (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1976), pp. 59-72; Bruce W. Watson, Red Navy at Sea (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982), pp. 85-87.

peacetime strength of some seven warships: a Kotlin-class destroyer (DDG) armed with SAM missiles, two Riga-class frigates, a Mirka-class corvette (or light frigate), a Petya-class corvette, and two minesweepers. On May 12 two Soviet ships entered the Mediterranean from the Black Sea: the Slava, an old Kirov-class cruiser whose main armament was nine 7.1-inch guns, and a Kashin-class DDG. This was probably a routine deployment, perhaps a training cruise for cadets or recruits. By May 22, however, Turkey had received notification from the Soviet Union that an additional ten ships would be passing through the Turkish Straits into the Mediterranean. Four Soviet warships passed through the Turkish Straits on June 3 and 4: a Krupnyy-class destroyer armed with two SS-N-1 anti-ship cruise missile launchers, a Kildin-class destroyer armed with one SS-N-1 anti-ship cruise missile launcher, a Kashin-class DDG, and a Kotlin-class destroyer. As of June 5, the Soviets had a total of thirteen surface combatants in the Mediterranean: one cruiser, two cruise missile-armed destroyers, two SAM-armed destroyers, two destroyers, four frigates and corvettes, and two minesweepers. No further surface combatants were added during the war. Two or three Soviet attack submarines were also thought to be in the Mediterranean.[413]

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[413] "Soviet is Sending 10 More Warships to Middle East," New York Times, May 31, 1967, p. 1; "Soviet Ships Transit Straits," New York Times, June 1, 1967, p. 18; "Soviet Ships in Bosporous," New York Times, June 4, 1967,

If the Soviets intended the deployment of these ships to serve as a political signal, they succeeded. The New York Times on May 31 quoted "Washington officials" as saying the Soviet ship movements were a "calculated show of force" and reported concern in Washington that the presence of the Soviet ships might encourage the Arab states to harden their Anti-Israeli stance.[414]

As tensions mounted in the Middle East during May and early June of 1967, the Sixth Fleet was discretely readied for action and maneuvered in support of the President's diplomatic efforts to get Egypt to open the Strait of Tiran and thereby avert war.[415] On May 20 Saratoga was moved to the eastern Mediterranean. On May 25 America and the Sixth Fleet flagship, Little Rock, were ordered to join Saratoga in the eastern Mediterranean.[416] The two carriers

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p. 4; "A Larger Soviet Vessel Follows U.S. Carrier in the Mediterranean," New York Times, June 4, 1967, p. 4. Also see Wells, pp. 160-62; Dismukes, p. 497. There is no information available on Soviet submarine deployments during the crisis. Dismukes argues that it is reasonable to assume that the number of Soviet submarines in the Mediterranean would have increased proportional to the increase in surface combatants, but there is no evidence that this in fact occurred.

[414] "Soviet is Sending 10 More Warships to Middle East," New York Times, May 31, 1967, p. 1

[415] Sick p. 57.

[416] The western Mediterranean extends from the Strait of Gibralter to the Strait of Sicily, including the Alboran, Tyrrhenian, and Ligurian Seas. The central Mediterranean extends from the Strait of Sicily to the southern tip of Greece, including the Ionian and Adriatic Seas. The eastern

rendezvoused north of Crete on May 29. The Sixth Fleet was directed to remain west of a line drawn from eastern Libya to the eastern end of Crete--over two hundred miles from western Egypt, over four hundred miles from the Suez Canal, and over six hundred miles from Syria. On May 25 the Sixth Fleet amphibious group (TF 61) was sailed from Naples to Malta for a port visit. The amphibious group was standing by primarily to evacuate U.S. citizens from the Middle East if the need arose, but was also capable of landing the Marines it carried. On May 27 the JCS directed the Sixth Fleet readied for a non-combat deterrence role in the event of war in the Middle East.[417]

The Navy's Middle East Force normally consisted of two destroyers and the flagship, a seaplane tender. In mid-May the Navy had used the normal rotation of ships to reinforce the Middle East Force by delaying the departure of the destroyer being replaced. On May 23 Commander Middle East Force was directed to move his four ships into the Red Sea.

Mediterranean extends from the southern tip of Greece eastward, including the Sea of Crete and the Aegean Sea. This reflects common U.S. Navy and Government usage.

[417] "Johnson Calls on Cairo to Abandon Blockade Moves," New York Times, May 24, 1967, p. 1; "Soviet Watching U.S. Fleet," <u>New York Times</u>, May 31, 1967, p. 16; "Soviet Destroyer off Malta," <u>New York Times</u>, June 3, 1967, p. 31; "Two U.S. Carriers Staying in Place," <u>New York Times</u>, June 6, 1967, p. 18; J.C. Wylie, "The Sixth Fleet and American Diplomacy," in J.C. Hurewitz, ed., <u>Soviet-American Rivalry in the Middle East</u> (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), p. 58; Wylie, letter to author, March 28, 1988. Also see Dismukes, p. 497; Howe p. 69; Sick, p. 56; Wells, p. 164.

On June 1 Middle East Force established two patrols in the Red Sea. On June 3 the destroyer USS Dyess (DD 880) transited the Suez canal into the Red Sea. This was a routine rotation of ships, but resulted in further reinforcement of the Middle East Force.[418] There were no interactions between U.S. and Soviet naval units in the Red Sea during the Six Day war.

The Soviet navy closely monitored Sixth Fleet movements on the eve of the crisis. On about May 23 a Soviet intelligence collection ship (AGI) began shadowing Saratoga. On May 28 a Riga-class frigate began trailing America as she moved into the eastern Mediterranean. On June 4 a Kashin-class DDG took over trailing America and remained with the carrier through the start of the war. Two Soviet minesweepers were monitoring the British carrier HMS Victorious at Malta. They were joined by a Kotlin-class destroyer on June 2. The Soviet ships shadowing American carriers were "tattletales," assigned to monitor the carriers' operations and provide targeting data for Soviet anti-carrier forces, particularly strike aircraft.[419]

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[418] "Canal Reprisal Hinted by Egypt," New York Times, June 3, 1967, p. 8; Wylie, "Sixth Fleet," p. 60; Wylie, letter to author, March 28, 1988.

[419] "Soviet Watching U.S. Fleet," New York Times, May 31, 1967, p. 16; "Soviet Destroyer off Malta," New York Times, June 3, 1967, p. 31; "A Larger Soviet Vessel Follows U.S. Carrier in Mediterranean," New York Times, June 4, 1967, p. 4. Also see Wells 162-4; Dismukes, p. 497.

Rear Admiral J.C. Wylie, Deputy Commander in Chief of U.S. Naval Forces Europe during the Six Day War, pointed out that Navy commanders, recognizing that Sixth Fleet movements would send important political signals, placed limitations on the fleet's actions during May and early June: "Thus the move to readiness in the Arab-Israeli mobilization period had three careful signals built into it: no premature departures from scheduled port visits; the deliberate and visible retention of the amphibious forces in the central Mediterranean; and the purposeful retention of American forces south of Crete and well clear of the prospective scene of action."[420] Additionally, in order to avoid giving the impression that the Sixth Fleet was being reinforced, the attack carrier USS Intrepid (CVA 11), en route from the U.S. east coast to Vietnam, was not placed under the command of COMSIXTHFLT and was kept away from the rest of the Sixth Fleet. Intrepid was ordered on May 29 to transit the Suez Canal and made the transit on May 31.[421]

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[420] Wylie, "Sixth Fleet." p. 59. Rear Admiral Wylie, who participated in the crisis at CINCUSNAVEUR, emphasizes that these restrictions were originally imposed by the Navy chain of command, rather than the White House: "The naval command estimated, correctly as it turned out, that the United States policy would be to stand aloof from military involvement if possible, to play the United States military role in as low a key as possible in order to give the greatest scope for diplomatic maneuver, but to be ready and on hand." Ibid.

[421] Wylie, "Sixth Fleet," p.59; Wells, p. 164. The actions taken to avoid the appearance that Intrepid was reinforcing the Sixth Fleet may have been too subtle to be

On May 31 the carriers of TF 60, which had been operating together since May 25, were split into two task groups operating independently. That night America, accompanied by Little Rock, moved to a position south of Crete, leaving Saratoga north of the island. The two carriers remained in these areas through June 6.[422] On June 4, the day before war broke out, most of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron (eleven ships, including Slava) was anchored at the Kithira anchorage south of Greece and west of Crete.[423] These were the dispositions of U.S. and Soviet naval forces in the Mediterranean when war erupted on June 5.

When war broke out on June 5 the two U.S. carriers were operating (in their separate groups) in the vicinity of Crete. The Sixth Fleet remained in the Eastern Mediterranean to deter Soviet intervention, but was kept

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readily discerned. The U.S. press reported on May 31 that Intrepid had been ordered to remain in the Mediterranean to reinforce the Sixth Fleet. See "Soviet Watching U.S. Fleet," New York Times, May 31, 1967, p. 16; "Admiral Says Soviet Shadowing Often Imperils Ships in 6th Fleet," New York Times, June 1, 1967, p. 18. The fact that Intrepid loitered in the central Mediterranean for six days before transiting the Suez Canal appears to have been the origin of such erroneous reports (the delay was caused by Egyptian reluctance to let the carrier make the transit).

[422] "2 U.S. Carriers Continue Air Exercises Near Crete," New York Times, June 3, 1967, p. 12; "Two U.S. Carriers Staying in Place," New York Times, June 6, 1967, p. 18.

[423] "Two U.S. Carriers Staying in Place," New York Times, June 6, 1967, p. 18. Also see Wells, p. 162; Dismukes, p. 498; Howe p. 117.

well clear of the fighting. The U.S. Navy unit closest to the fighting on June 5 was a lone Navy carrier-based reconnaissance plane on a routine flight one hundred nautical miles off the coast of Egypt. The Sixth Fleet initially was ordered to remain at least one hundred nautical miles from the Syrian coast, but in fact did not approach closer than about four hundred nautical miles. Carrier aircraft were ordered to remain at least two hundred nautical miles from the Egyptian and Israeli coasts. The U.S. carriers were placed at an increased condition of readiness, which included doubling the number of aircraft ready for immediate launch and arming strike aircraft with conventional bombs and missiles.[424]

The political caution that had marked Sixth fleet operations prior to the crisis continued after the war broke out.[425] Ship movements were announced and routine port

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[424] "Navy Says One Plane Flew Near War Zone," New York Times, June 10, 1967, p. 22; "6th Fleet Ships in State of Alert," New York Times, June 7, 1967, p. 17; "2nd Russian Ship Watches Carrier," New York Times, June 8, 1967, p. 14; Howe, p. 93. The ships of the Sixth Fleet were ordered to readiness condition three, an internal Navy readiness designation unrelated to the JCS worldwide DEFCON system. Navy ships were normally at "Condition IV," defined as normal peacetime steaming. At "Condition III" the ships would put additional crewmen on watch and man certain weapons and combat systems normally left unmanned.

[425] Wells observes that "The U.S. and U.K. went to considerable pains to show that they did not intend to use their naval forces offensively." Wells, p. 164. Similarly, Howe noted that "The posture of the Sixth Fleet reflected American interest in avoiding involvement." Howe, p. 93.

visits and shore liberty continued.[426] Significantly, seventeen civilian reporters embarked America beginning on May 29. Vice Admiral Engen, Commanding Officer of America during the crisis, stated that "We used the embarked press corps to provide safety from misrepresentation. That was a U.S. tactic."[427] Thus, the emphasis in Sixth Fleet operations was on demonstrating the U.S. intention to avoid involvement in the fighting.

On June 5 and 6 the two U.S. carrier groups steamed to the southeast. Although the press would correctly report this movement as a deliberate signal to the Soviets, it was, as Howe reports, ordered by the Task Force Commander without prior knowledge of the White House:

> As it happened, the Sixth Fleet carrier task forces had begun speeding at twenty knots in a southeasterly direction in order to vary their "position while still maintaining a neutral posture with respect to the Arab-Israeli war." The ships were under orders to remain at least 200 miles from the area of conflict, and proceeded to a position 100 miles southeast of Crete. Although this change of position was ordered on the initiative of local commanders, the movement

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[426] Wylie, "Sixth Fleet," p. 58-59; Engen, letter to author, March 21, 1988; Wells, p. 164. The only exception to the policy of continuing routine ports visits was that the JCS on May 27 cancelled all port visits for the two U.S. aircraft carriers. As a result of this action, America remained at sea from May 22 to June 21--the longest the carrier had been at sea continuously since commissioning. USS America (CVA 67), Ship's History, 1967 (Ships History Branch, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC).

[427] Engen, letter to author, March 21, 1988. Also see USS America (CVA 67), Ship's History, 1967 (Ships History Branch, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC); Wylie, "Sixth Fleet," p. 59; Wells, p. 164.

> represented a timely underlining of American determination. The White House took advantage of the repositioning as a means of showing the Russians, who were tailing the task forces, that the United States would not be intimidated although it earnestly sought a U.N. solution.[428]

This episode illustrates that the White House was not exercising positive direct control over the movements of the carriers. Had the President felt that the movement of the carrier force would send too threatening a signal, he could have ordered it to reverse course and move away from the fighting (thus exercising control by negation). Instead, because the movement supported the President's political objectives, it was publicized and allowed to continue.

On June 6 Egypt claimed that U.S. and British carrier aircraft had assisted Israel in its initial air strikes on Egyptian airfields. The Soviets, whose ships were closely monitoring the Sixth Fleet carriers, knew that U.S. carrier planes could not have participated in the attacks.[429] In response to the Arab charge, the two U.S. carriers, then

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[428] Howe, p. 95. He quotes Rear Admiral Guise, commander of the carrier task force. For how the press reported the movement, see "6th Fleet Ships in State of Alert," New York Times, June 7, 1967, p. 17.

[429] "U.S. Denies Charges By Cairo It Helps Foe," New York Times, June 7, 1967, p. 1; "2nd Russian Ship Watches Carrier," New York Times, June 8, 1967, p. 14; Johnson, p. 302; Wylie, "Sixth Fleet," p. 59. Also see Trevor N. Dupuy, Elusive Victory: The Arab-Israeli Wars, 1947-1974 (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), p. 269; Howe, pp. 99-102; Sick p. 56; Wells, p. 165; Laqueur, p. 155. Egyptian President Nasser would later admit that no U.S. planes had attacked Egypt. "Envoys Say Nasser Now Concedes U.S. Didn't Help Israel," New York Times, September 16, 1967, p. 3; Howe, p. 119.

southeast of Crete, were ordered on June 6 to move westward. The U.S. carriers continued moving westward through June 8, reaching a position southwest of Crete.

On June 7 a suspected Soviet submarine was detected in the vicinity of the America task group and was tracked by U.S. destroyers, ASW helicopters, and patrol planes.[430] This appears to have sparked the most severe Soviet harassment of the Sixth Fleet during the crisis. On June 7 a Soviet Kashin-class DDG trailing the America task group threatened to collide with the destroyer USS Lawe (DD 763) in a nautical version of the game "chicken." This incident could well have been sparked by the U.S. prosecution of a suspected Soviet submarine near the America task group. In response to the incident, Vice Admiral Martin sent a message to the Soviet destroyer, warning it to clear the U.S. formation. The Soviet ship withdrew, but returned the next morning. On June 8 the America task group experienced the most severe Soviet harassment of the crisis. The Kashin-class DDG and a Mirka-class corvette maneuvered dangerously close to America, attempting to force the carrier to change course while it was conducting flight operations. The harassment on June 8 appears to have been a defiant reponse

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[430] The Navy objective was to "trail to exhaustion," that is, to track the submarine until it had to surface or snorkel in the presence of U.S. ASW forces in order to recharge its batteries--a symbolic victory in peacetime ASW operations (with the subtle message that the submarine could have been hunted to destruction in wartime).

to Vice Admiral Martin's warning to the Soviet destroyer the previous day.[431]

The Sixth Fleet had previously experienced serious problems with Soviet surveillance vessels and had sent them warnings to keep clear of U.S. formations. There was great concern among Navy commanders in the Mediterranean that there would be further incidents because the Soviet ships had adopted aggressive shadowing tactics, maneuvering dangerously close to U.S. ships.[432] Vice Admiral Engen, then the Commanding Officer of America, has described the U.S. Navy attitude toward Soviet harassment:

> We telegraphed intentions to maneuver and then held firm to [the] Rules of the Road. . . . COMSIXTHFLT and CTF 60 [Rear Admiral Geis] were strongly supportive of U.S. C.O.'s in order to keep [the] Soviets from achieving [success with] what were then harassing tactics. . . . [I experienced] frequent Soviet attempts to embarrass USS America by maneuvering to

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[431] "Russians Continue to Harass 6th Fleet," New York Times, June 9, 1967, p. 1. Also see Howe, p. 177n; Wells, p. 215n. The Soviets have been known to harass U.S. ships prosecuting their submarines on other occasions as well. For a description of a similar incident in 1972, see Rear Admiral Robert P. Hilton, "The US-Soviet Incidents at Sea treaty," Naval Forces 6 (1/1985): 30-31.

[432] Engen, letter to author, March 21, 1988; "Admiral Says Soviet Shadowing Often Imperils Ships in 6th Fleet," New York Times, June 1, 1967, p. 18. There had also been two serious incidents in the Sea of Japan on May 10 and 11, when two Soviet destroyers collided with the destroyer USS Walker (DD 517) while maneuvering in the midst of an ASW carrier formation. This incident received front page headlines in the United States and was on the minds of Navy commanders in the Mediterranean. On the Walker, see "A U.S. Destroyer In Far East Bumped By Soviet warship," New York Times, May 11, 1967, p. 1; "Soviet Warship Bumps U.S. Vessel 2nd Time in 2 Days," New York Times, May 12, 1967, p. 1.

> use [the] Rules of the Road to interfere with flight operations. I held firm, and would have run down a Soviet ship if I was right.[433]

Soviet harassment thus was more than an annoyance, it could well have led to a serious collision with an American warship.[434] A serious collision would have increased tensions in the Mediterranean and might also have interfered with Washington's and Moscow's efforts to manage the crisis.

On June 8 the U.S. amphibious group with its embarked Marines departed Malta and steamed eastward toward the war zone. Also on June 8, America and Little Rock moved eastward to provide assistance to USS Liberty, under attack off the Sinai coast. On June 9, when America rendezvoused with Liberty, the carriers made their closest approach to the fighting, reaching a position about one hundred nautical miles north of Alexandria, Egypt. After taking aboard the dead and wounded from Liberty the carriers moved westward, reaching a position north of Darnah, Libya,. by June 10.[435]

On June 10, in response to the Soviet threat to take military action against Israel, President Johnson ordered

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[433] Engen, letter to author, March 21, 1988.

[434] There was a serious collision between the British aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal and a Soviet destroyer in the Mediterranean on November 9, 1970. "Soviet and British Warships Collide," New York Times, November 11, 1970, p. 2. Soviet maneuvering in this incident was very similar to that conducted near America in 1967.

[435] USS America (CVA 67), Ship's History, 1967; Howe, p. 96, 103-4.

the Sixth Fleet moved closer to Syria. The U.S. carriers steamed to the northeast at full speed. The President also reduced the fleet's minimum distance to the Syrian coast from one hundred to fifty nautical miles.[436] In his memoir President Johnson makes it clear that this was done as a political signal:

> We knew that Soviet intelligence ships were electronically monitoring the fleet's every movement. Any change in course or speed would be signalled instantly to Moscow. . . . We all knew the Russians would get the message as soon as their monitors observed the change in the fleet's pattern. That message, which no translator would need to interpret to the Kremlin leadership, was that the United States was prepared to resist Soviet intrusion into the Middle East.[437]

This was the most important instance of the Sixth Fleet being used to send a specific political signal. It is not clear, however, that the signal had a major impact on the crisis: Israel apparently had no intention of seizing Damascus and soon stopped its advance into Syria, and the Soviets made no military overt moves to carry out the threat.[438]

The most important Soviet naval activity during the crisis was trailing the U.S. carriers in the Mediterranean. <u>America</u> was shadowed by one or more Soviet warships continuously from May 28 to June 14, but neither of the

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[436] Johnson, p. 302; Howe, pp. 106-8; Wells, p. 165-6.

[437] Johnson, p. 302.

[438] Howe, pp. 106-8; Wells, p. 165-6.

Soviet cruise missile-armed destroyers participated in this shadowing. Saratoga was not shadowed by Soviet warships other than during the May 29-31 period, when she was operating with America. Saratoga was probably trailed by a Soviet intelligence ship (AGI) from May 23 to June 13. The Soviet navy also kept a Kotlin-class destroyer and two type T-43 minesweepers off Malta throughout the war.[439] Although this close surveillance of the Sixth Fleet was conducted primarily for military purposes, it helped to avert misperceptions of the fleet's role in the crisis (such as the claim that U.S. carrier planes had attacked Egypt) and greatly increased the value of the U.S. fleet as a political instrument by ensuring that Soviet leaders would quickly detect changes in its operations.

Armed surface warships were frequently used as tattletales during the crisis because they had a higher top speed than the intelligence ships (AGIs) and therefore were better able to keep up with U.S. carriers. The Soviet destroyers and frigates that were used as tattletales were not heavily armed, so they did not present a serious immediate threat to the carriers. In fact, the Soviet combatants that served a tattletales appear to have been selected precisely because they were expendable (the only

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[439] "6th Fleet Ships in State of Alert," New York Times, June 7, 1967, p. 17; "2nd Russian Ship Watches Carrier," New York Times, June 8, 1967, p. 14. Also see Wells, p. 164; Dismukes, p. 497.

exceptions were the fast new Kashin-class destroyers, selected because of their speed). On the other hand, as Anthony Wells points out, use of combatants rather than AGIs as tattletales "expresses increased Soviet interest, both military and political, in the force being shadowed."[440] The Soviet tattletales thus served as political signal to the United States, as well as being means of conveying U.S. political signals to the Soviet Union.

Anthony Wells has suggested that the Soviet ships in the Mediterranean comprised two anti-carrier groups.[441] If this were the case, the Soviet ships would have been organized into two distinct groups, one group within missile range of each carrier, with a cruise missile-armed ship in each group. This pattern was never observed during the crisis. Although the two Soviet cruise missile-armed ships occasionally moved to within missile range of the U.S. carriers, it is clear that they did not make a concerted effort to keep the carriers in their sights. The Soviet Mediterranean Squadron carried out operations at a very low tempo.[442]

As tensions subsided after the ceasefire took effect on June 11, the U.S. and Soviet navies gradually reduced the

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[440] Wells, p. 164.

[441] Ibid, p. 160.

[442] Dismukes, p. 498.

tempo of their operations and reduced their forces in the eastern Mediterranean. From June 12 to June 16 six of the Soviet warships were located near Cyprus, apparently to protect Soviet shipping to Syria.[443] This was the last significant Soviet naval operation of the crisis. U.S. naval forces left the eastern Mediterranean after the ceasefire: Saratoga departed on June 13, America departed on June 14, and the amphibious group departed on June 15.

In summary, tactical-level interactions between U.S. and Soviet naval forces were intense during the crisis. Soviet tattletales closely monitored the Sixth Fleet and U.S. aircraft closely monitored the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron. Tensions at sea were acute on June 7 and 8 during U.S. prosecution of a Soviet submarine and Soviet harassment of the America carrier group. Because U.S. and Soviet naval forces were in close proximity throughout the crisis, there were ample opportunities for inadvertent military incidents to occur between them.

The final step in this review of U.S. naval operations during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War is to examine the tactical-level interactions that could have occurred with Soviet or Arab forces and the interactions that did occur with those forces. The following interactions conceivably could have occurred during the the crisis: collisions at sea between

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[443] Wells, p. 165. The Soviets also conducted an airlift of supplies to Syria and Egypt from June 8 to July 2.

U.S. and Soviet vessels, U.S. ships or aircraft firing on Soviet or Arab planes approaching the fleet in a potentially hostile manner, U.S. ships or aircraft firing on Arab naval vessels approaching the fleet in a potentially hostile manner, Soviet naval vessels firing on U.S. planes approaching them in a potentially hostile manner, Arab or Israeli aircraft firing on U.S. planes flying reconnaissance missions off their coasts, and Arab or Israeli aircraft or ships firing on U.S. ships patrolling off their coasts.

Despite the intense tactical-level interaction between U.S. and Soviet Naval forces, there were no incidents like those described above. There were no collisions despite Soviet harassment of the Sixth Fleet. No Soviet aircraft were encountered during the crisis, which is unusual for the Mediterranean. No Egyptian or Syrian vessels or aircraft were encountered during the crisis because the sixth Fleet was kept well clear of their coasts.[423] There were very few accidents involving U.S. naval forces, and none serious enough to have an impact on Washington's ability to manage the crisis. The only incident of the crisis was the Israeli attack on the Liberty. Thus, ironically, the only mishap of the crisis was perpetrated by the nation that the U.S. supported in the war.

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[444] Engen, letter to author March 21, 1988; Wylie, letter to author, March 28, 1988; Wells, p. 165.

Findings

This section will review the 1967 Arab-Israeli War to answer the eight research questions. The first question is to what degree were interactions between the forces of the two sides at the scene of the crisis the result of actions taken in accordance with mechanisms of indirect control, rather than direct control by national leaders? The Johnson Administration did not attempt to exercise direct control over the operations of the Sixth Fleet other than its movements in the Mediterranean. Nor did the President or McNamara make an effort to provide specialized guidance in mechanisms of indirect control, other than limitations on how close the fleet and its aircraft could approach the coasts of the belligerents. When the America carrier group experienced severe Soviet harassment on June 8 the on-scene commanders were guided by standing Navy policies for handling such situations, rather than by special instructions from the White House. There was thus significant delegation of authority to on-scene commanders and the guidance contained in Navy standing orders and standing rules of engagement played a crucial role in determining the nature of the tactical-level interactions that occurred.

The second question is were the forces of the two sides at the scene of the crisis tightly coupled with each other? Soviet tattletales closely monitored the Sixth

Fleet, U.S. aircraft closely monitored the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron, and U.S. ships and planes hunted Soviet submarines.[445] As Anthony Wells points out, "Each navy devoted considerable effort to tracking the other through radar, sonar, electronic intercept, and visual observation."[446] Each side reacted to actions taken by the other side. Thus, Soviet and American naval forces were tightly coupled during the crisis.

The third question is were the forces of the two sides being used by their national leaders as a political instrument in the crisis? The answer clearly is yes. The Johnson Administration used the Sixth Fleet to signal the U.S. intention not to intervene in the crisis, but also used the fleet to warn the Soviets against direct military intervention in the conflict. The Soviet Union also conveyed political signals by rapidly building up its Mediterranean squadron, shadowing the Sixth Fleet, and keeping the bulk of the squadron well clear of the fighting and the Sixth Fleet. The 1967 Arab-Israeli War was the first crisis in which both superpowers actively used their navies for political signalling.

The answers to these first three questions suggest that conditions necessary for stratified interaction existed

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[445] "6th Fleet Ships in State of Alert," New York Times, June 7, 1967, p. 17; Wylie, "Sixth Fleet," p. 59.

[446] Wells, p. 167.

in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War: the United States relied on methods of delegated control, U.S. and Soviet naval forces in the Mediterranean were tightly coupled, and both sides used their forces as a political instrument under conditions of conditions of acute crisis. Interactions occurred at the tactical level that were not directly controlled by American leaders. For example, President Johnson had no control over whether or not the Soviet harassment of America on June 8 would produce a clash between the U.S. and Soviet navies. The stratified interaction model of international crises, in which interactions evolve in separate, semi-independent sequences at the political, strategic, and tactical levels, offers a good description of Soviet-American interactions in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

The fourth question is did crisis interactions at the tactical level become decoupled from the strategy being pursued by national leaders? One of the potential causes of decoupling was prominent in the crisis: the U.S. communications system did not permit the President to exercise real-time direct control over the Sixth Fleet. President Johnson's ability to control the Sixth Fleet in 1967 was less than President Kennedy's ability to control the Second Fleet during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. President Johnson had to rely more on command by negation and delegated command than did President Kennedy. Another potential cause of decoupling--a fast-paced tactical environment--was also present during some periods of the crisis. The Sixth Fleet reacted to the attack on Liberty hours before it received instructions from the Washington. Similarly, the President could not tell Rear Admiral Geis or Captain Engen how to handle the Soviet ships harassing America and her escorts. The other potential causes of decoupling--impairment of political decisionmaking, ambiguous or ambivalent orders, tactically inappropriate orders, inappropriate guidance in mechanisms of indirect control, and deliberate unauthorized actions by military commanders--did not have an observable impact on the crisis.

The second requirement for establishing that interactions became decoupled during a crisis is that the operational decisions made by tactical-level decisionmakers differed from the decisions that political-level decisionmakers would have made in order to coordinate military operations with their political-diplomatic strategy for resolving the crisis. Divergence between tactical-level military operations and political-level objectives was not a serious problem during the crisis. Although on-scene commanders were often making operational decisions on their own authority, their decisions generally supported the President's political objectives. For example, Sixth Fleet movements on June 6, taken on the initiative of Rear Admiral Geis, sent the political signal the President wanted to send at that moment even though he had not ordered the movement.

Thus, the overall pattern was that of parallel stratified interactions: interactions the President did not control, but which supported his political objectives.

There may have been one instance of tactical-level military operations diverging from political-level objectives: the response of Navy on-scene commanders to Soviet harassment on June 8. Navy commanders were determined not to be intimidated by the dangerous maneuvering of the Soviet ships, even at the risk of a collision. The stern warning Vice Admiral Martin sent to the Soviet destroyer and the ensuing game of chicken may not have been the types of actions President Johnson desired for managing tensions with the Soviet Union. However, there is no evidence that he disapproved of how the the Navy commanders handled the situation--there were no collisions or shots fired--so even this incident is not a clear case of decoupling.

The fifth question is did national leaders and on-scene commanders hold different perceptions of the vulnerability of on-scene forces to pre-emption and the need to strike first in the event of an armed clash? Threat perceptions were not acute at any level of the chain of command and there is evidence that officials in Washington were more concerned about the Soviet Navy than were the on-scene commanders. For example, when Liberty was attacked McNamara and others in Washington thought that the Soviets might have been responsible, while Navy commanders in the

Mediterranean, who were closely monitoring Soviet movements, knew that Soviet forces could not have conducted the attack.[447] If anything, Navy on-scene commanders perceived the Soviet threat to the Sixth Fleet to be less dangerous than did civilian officials in Washington. Threat perceptions and the security dilemma thus were not stratified during the crisis.

The sixth question is, when tactical-level interactions become decoupled, what factors inhibit escalation dynamics from occurring at the tactical level and being transmitted upward to the strategic and political levels of interaction? Although there were intense tactical-level interactions during the crisis, there were no cases of such interactions generating an escalation sequence the President could not control. The most dangerous interactions took place on June 7 and 8 during Soviet harassment of America and her escorts. This interaction sequence did escalate, in the sense that a second Soviet ship joined the harassment on the second day, but did not escalate to violence. There

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[447] McNamara has stated that he initially thought the Soviets had attacked Liberty. "Secretary Rusk and Secretary of Defense McNamara Discuss Viet-Nam and Korea on 'Meet the Press'," Department of State Bulletin 58 (February 26, 1968): 271. Also see Howe, p. 102. Navy commanders knew that there were no Soviet tactical aircraft or torpedo boats in the Mediterranean and therefore did not suspect the Soviets of the attack. Rivero, letter to author, March 10, 1988; Wylie, letter to author, March 28, 1988; Engen, letter to author, March 21, 1988. Also see Howe, p. 103; Wells, p. 167; Williams, p. 118.

were no collisions and no shots were fired. Although naval commanders on both sides were determined not to be intimidated, they were cautious to avoid collisions. Their caution arose not so much from concern over the political repercussions of an incident, but from the prudence any good seaman would show under the circumstances. Collisions at sea are extremely dangerous, so that even deliberate collisions for signaling purposes are performed with great caution. Thus, the first factor inhibiting escalation was caution on the part of U.S. leaders in the restrictions they placed on Sixth Fleet movements and caution on the part of U.S. naval commanders in the Mediterranean when potentially serious incidents did occur.

The June 7-8 harassment incident stands out because it was entirely different from the behavior of the Soviet navy during the rest of the crisis. On one other occasion a Riga-class frigate trailing America approached the carrier as close as 700 to 1,000 yards. Both this frigate and a Soviet AGI following Saratoga frequently maneuvered inside the U.S. formations, a dangerous practice when the carrier groups maneuver to conduct flight operations. When a larger Kashin-class destroyer was trailing America, the Soviet vessel maneuvered with greater caution, generally remaining three to four miles behind the carrier.[448] But none of these

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[448] "Soviet Watching U.S. Fleet," New York Times, May 31, 1967, p. 16; "Admiral Says Soviet Shadowing Often

trailing operations constituted deliberate harassment of the U.S. carriers. Overall, as Anthony Wells points out, "The style of Soviet tattletale operations in this situation was conservative. . . . Soviet units in the Mediterranean generally avoided any action that could be construed as systematic harassment." [449]

The second factor inhibiting escalation was that the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron generally behaved in a cautious and circumspect manner.[450] It did not practice anti-carrier strikes on the U.S. carriers. In fact, the two Soviet destroyers armed with anti-ship cruise missiles rarely were in the vicinity of the U.S. carriers. Soviet submarines also appear to have maintained a low profile, rather than aggressively pursuing the U.S. carriers, and no Soviet long-range strike aircraft were detected during the crisis. This Soviet caution was an important factor in the lack of escalation during particularly intense interactions at sea. U.S. Navy commanders could tolerate a certain amount of indiscretion by individual Soviet ships because it clearly was not part of a pattern of harassment and did not appear to presage a Soviet pre-emptive attack. Thus, while

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Imperils Ships of 6th Fleet," New York Times, June 1, 1967, p. 18; "A Larger Soviet Vessel Follows U.S. Carrier in Mediterranean," New York Times, June 4, 1967, p. 4

[449] Wells, p. 165.

[450] A conclusion shared by Dismukes, p. 498; Fukuyama, pp. 595-97; Wells, pp. 166-67.

Soviet efforts to show caution around the Sixth Fleet were not entirely successful in preventing tensions from arising, they did help to prevent serious incidents from occurring.

The third factor inhibiting escalation was the tight coupling between U.S. and Soviet naval forces in the Mediterranean. Sixth Fleet carrier aircraft and patrol planes kept Vice Admiral Martin and the chain of command up to the President informed of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron's operations and movements. Soviet tattletales probably kept Moscow informed of Sixth Fleet operations and movements on a near real-time basis. Overall, this was beneficial for crisis management because the signal the United States and Soviets were sending with their fleets was one of non-involvement in the hostilities. When Soviet ships harassed America, Vice Admiral Martin knew it was an isolated act and that the rest of the Soviet squadron was operating normally. When Israel attacked Liberty, Vice Admiral Martin knew that the Soviets probably were not responsible because he knew where their ships were and that they did not have any tactical aircraft over the Mediterranean. Thus, although tight coupling is generally perceived as increasing the danger of escalation in crises, it can also reduce the likelihood of escalation when both sides are attempting to avoid involvement in a local conflict.

The fourth factor inhibiting escalation was use of the Soviet-American hot line. Both sides used the hot line to express concerns, give warnings, and avoid misperceptions. Of particular importance was President Johnson's use of the hot line to warn the Soviets of the U.S. response to the attack on Liberty, which ensured that Soviet leaders would not misperceive the purpose of the sudden launch of carrier aircraft and America's sprint toward the Sinai. The hot line was thus used to dampen the potential negative effects of tight coupling between U.S. and Soviet naval forces in the Mediterranean. Ironically, while tight coupling of the naval forces in the Mediterranean increased the need for the hot line, it also increased the effectiveness of the hot line as a means for conveying political messages. Soviet and American leaders could verify the veracity of statements made by the other side by comparing them with reports on the other side's naval operations. The essential requirement for this synergistic relationship to exist was careful coordination of naval operations with political objectives and diplomatic initiatives. The United States and the Soviet Union were largely successful in achieving such coordination.

The seventh question is did actions taken with military forces send inadvertent signals to either adversaries or friends, and did inadvertent military incidents occur that affected efforts to manage the crisis? There do not appear to have been any instances of the Soviets seriously misperceiving the intent of Sixth Fleet operations, largely due to close Soviet monitoring of the fleet and United States use of the hot line. However, Lieutenant Commander Gary L. Sick, a naval intelligence officer stationed at the American embassy in Cairo in 1967, has suggested that Sixth Fleet movements in May--before the war broke out--were misperceived by Arab leaders:

> American policy was designed to use a military show of force to convince Nasser that he should reopen the Strait of Tiran and defuse the mounting tension in the area. This was to be accomplished by a series of careful moves and "signals" to the Egyptian Government. The moves were indeed observed by the Arab governments, but the signals were misinterpreted in the atmosphere of tension and distrust. As shown by the Syrian statement early in the crisis [May 15] and by President Nasser's reference to the 6th Fleet [May 29], the Arabs strongly suspected an attack by U.S. forces and tended to disregard relatively subtle evidence to the contrary. Thus, the American policy did not succeed and, in fact, provided the grounds for making the United States the scapegoat for a situation it had tried desperately to prevent.[451]

To review, in May the Sixth Fleet was concentrated in the eastern Mediterranean: Saratoga on May 20, and America and Little Rock on May 25. Although the carriers were directed to remain over 400 miles from the Suez Canal, they easily could have moved to within air strike range in less than a day. Also in May, the U.S. Middle East Force was reinforced and concentrated near Egypt: In mid-May a third destroyer was added to the force, on May 23 the force was ordered into the Red Sea, and on June 3 a fourth destroyer was added to the force in the Red Sea. By June 3, then, the United

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[451] Sick p. 57.

States had four destroyers available to challenge the Egyptian blockade of the Strait of Tiran, and two carriers in the Mediterranean ready to retaliate against Egypt if the U.S. destoyers were attacked. The credibility of these U.S. naval moves can be questioned, given President Johnson's reluctance to act unilaterally in the Strait of Tiran, but it is certainly plausible that Egyptian President Nasser and other Arab leaders would view the moves as threatening.

Given such Egyptian and Syrian suspicions of U.S. intentions on the eve of the war, it is not surprising that Egypt would later claim--either thinking it was true or knowing it was false--that U.S. carrier aircraft had attacked Egypt. Sixth Fleet and Middle East Force movements in May, intended to support the President's efforts to pressure Nasser into reopening the Strait of Tiran, thus sent an inadvertent signal of hostility to the Arab nations. The inadvertent hostile signal would lead Arab leaders to assume U.S. hostility after war broke out. It thus complicated U.S. efforts to manage the crisis by lending credibility to Arab claims of American complicity in the Israeli attacks--claims that contributed to serious deterioration in U.S. relations with the Arab nations.

There were no inadvertent military incidents that seriously affected United States efforts to manage the crisis. The most serious incident of the crisis was the attack on the <u>Liberty</u>, but Israel quickly notified the

United States that it had conducted the attack, thus defusing tensions over the incident. The second most serious incident of the crisis was the harassment of <u>America</u> by two Soviet ships on June 7 and 8. But there were no collisions and no shots were fired. The absence of serious inadvertent incidents was largely due to the cautious manner in which the two superpowers conducted naval operations in the Mediterranean. Although there were relatively intense interactions between the two sides, the interactions could have been much more intense and dangerous than they actually were. The most important factor in avoiding incidents that could complicate crisis management, then, was decisions made by national leaders on the two sides that structured the tactical environment in such a manner as to moderate the intensity of tactical-level interactions and limit the tensions that would arise from those interactions.

The eighth question is did any of the three tensions between political and military considerations arise during the crisis? None of the three tensions was serious during the crisis. There was moderate tension between political considerations and the needs of diplomatic bargaining, on the one hand, and military considerations and the needs of military operations, on the other. This arose primarily from the restrictions placed on movements of the Sixth Fleet carriers and the efforts to use their movements for political signalling. The carrier force commanders objected to restrictions on their mobility, which denied them one of the greatest advantages of carrier air power, and the publicity surrounding their movements, which made it easier for the Soviets to target the carriers.[452] On the other hand, the restrictions on the carriers did not impose unreasonable limitations on their ability to carry out their immediate mission. Further, the restrictions were disregarded by the on-scene commander when it was necessary to respond to the attack on the <u>Liberty</u>. Vice Admiral Martin, on his own authority, launched aircraft to defend the ship and ordered <u>America</u> to close the scene at best speed. Both actions required violation of the geographic restrictions placed on the Sixth Fleet. However, the President soon authorized the actions Vice Admiral Martin had already initiated. Thus, the tension between political and military considerations was not serious.

There was also only moderate tension between the need for top-level control of military operations and the need for tactical flexibility and initiative at the scene of the crisis. The Johnson Administration handled the military chain of command much better than the Kennedy Administration had handled it in the Cuban Missile Crisis (Which is interesting given that McNamara was still Secretary of Defense).

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[442] Engen, letter to author, March 21, 1988; Wylie, letter to author, March 28, 1988; Rivero, letter to author, March 10, 1988.

Orders to the Sixth Fleet were passed via the chain of command and only essential aspects of Sixth Fleet operations--the general movements of the fleet in the Mediterranean--were closely controlled. The carrier force commanders were not happy about this control of their operations, but it did not seriously interfere with their ability to carry out their mission. The intense resentment against civilian interference that arose during the Cuban Missile Crisis was absent in 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

There was very little tension between performance of crisis political missions and readiness to perform wartime combat missions. Sixth Fleet operations during the crisis did not seriously detract from the fleet's readiness for wartime contingencies.[453] The only feature of the crisis operations that the on-scene commanders did not like, even though they understood its purpose and importance, was the publicizing of the fleet's movements. The carrier force commanders would have preferred to make Soviet efforts to track and target the carriers as difficult as possible. This is a crucial consideration in wartime operations, but one that directly conflicts with political crisis management considerations. Other than this, however, there was little tension between performance of crisis missions and readiness for wartime contingencies.

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[453] Ibid.

In summary, the stratified interaction model accurately describes Soviet-American interaction during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Although there were intense interactions between U.S. and Soviet naval forces in the Mediterranean, there were few instances of decoupled interactions. The overall pattern was one of parallel stratified interactions with occasional momentary decoupling. The only aspect of naval operations that was closely controlled was the movement of the Sixth fleet in the Mediterranean. Control by negation was exercised over other aspects of Sixth Fleet operations, but there were no instances of orders issued by the on-scene commander being countermanded by the White House. U.S. and Soviet naval forces were tightly coupled during the crisis, but there were no serious incidents between them. There were no serious political-military tensions during the crisis.

The 1973 Arab-Israeli War

The Fourth Arab-Israeli War erupted in October 1973 when Egypt launched a surprise attack on Israeli positions on the east bank of the Suez Canal and Syria attacked Israeli positions on the Golan Heights. After initial setbacks, Israel launched devastating counterattacks, ultimately crossing the Suez Canal and trapping the Egyptian Third Army. This precipitated a Soviet threat to intervene in the war, backed by mobilization of airborne forces. The

United States strongly backed Israel during the war, initiating (after a delay) a massive airlift of supplies and replacement aircraft. In response to the Soviet intervention threat, the United States declared worldwide Defense Condition three (DEFCON 3). The Sixth Fleet played an important role in U.S. foreign policy, supporting the airlift and countering Soviet military threats. The Soviet Mediterranean Squadron also played an active role in the crisis, demonstrating Soviet concerns and politically countering the Sixth Fleet.

Background

The 1973 Arab-Israeli War was the first major crisis in the era of Soviet-American detente. Detente had been inaugurated ceremonially at the May 1972 Nixon-Brezhnev summit in Moscow. During that summit the two leaders signed the ABM Treaty, the Interim Agreement on Limitation of Strategic Arms (the SALT I agreement), and the Basic Principles Agreement. The Basic Principles Agreement sought to codify the principles of detente and, among other things, called for restraint in seeking unilateral gain at the expense of the other party.[454] Arms control and regulation of superpower competition were thus the cornerstones of

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[454] See Alexander L. George, "The Basic Principles Agreement of 1972: Origins and Expectations," in Alexander L. George, Managing U.S.-Soviet Rivalry: Problems of Crisis Prevention (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983), pp. 107-117.

detente. Round one of the SALT II negotiations opened in November 1972. American involvement in the Indochina War, long a source of tension in Soviet-American relations, began winding down early the next year. On January 27, 1973 the U.S.-North Vietnamese peace treaty was signed and in February 1973 the last U.S. troops left South Vietnam. The second Nixon-Brezhnev summit was held in Washington and San Clemente in June 1973. During that summit the two leaders signed the Agreement on Prevention of Nuclear War, which, among other provisions, called for consultations between the superpowers in the event of nuclear accidents or third party nuclear threats. Soviet-American relations in 1973 were thus much better than they had been in the three previous crises examined in this study.

Another significant development in Soviet-American relations was the Incidents at Sea Agreement, signed May 25, 1972, during the first Nixon-Brezhnev summit. This agreement committed both sides to respect the international rules of the road for preventing collisions at sea and provided guidance for situations unique to naval forces (such as formations of ships) that were not adequately covered by the international rules. Beginning in 1960, there had been a long series of incidents between U.S. and Soviet naval vessels, including several collisions. The Incidents at Sea Agreement was intended to prevent such incidents in the future. In addition to specifying behavior for naval vessels at sea, the agreement set up a standard channel for reporting violations to the other side and called for annual review of the agreement. At the first annual review, held May 1973, a protocol to the agreement was signed that expanded its provisions. As of October 1973, there had been no high-intensity superpower naval operations that seriously tested the Incidents at Sea Agreement.[455]

Immediately after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War the Soviet Union began supplying large quantities of modern arms to Egypt and Syria in order to rebuild their shattered forces and restore Soviet influence among the Arab nations. From 1969 to late 1970, Egypt engaged Israel in a war of attrition along the Suez Canal. Both sides suffered heavy losses with no gains. In early 1970 the Soviets took over the air

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[455] "Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, <u>World Armaments and Disarmament: SIPRI Yearbook, 1973</u> (New York: Humanities Press, 1972), pp. 36-39. "Protocol to the Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas," signed May 25, 1973, U.S. Department of State, <u>United States Treaties and Other International Agreements</u>, Vol. 24, Part 1, 1973 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974), pp. 1063-64. Also see Anthony F. Wolf, "Agreement at Sea: The United States-USSR Agreement on Incidents at Sea," <u>Korean Journal of International Studies</u> 9 (3/1978): 57-80; Rear Admiral Robert P. Hilton, "The U.S.-Soviet Incidents at Sea treaty," <u>Naval Forces</u> 6 (1/1985): 30-37; Sean M. Lynn-Jones, "The Incidents at Sea Agreement," in Alexander L. George, Philip J. Farley, and Alexander Dallin, eds., <u>U.S.-Soviet Security Cooperation: Achievements, Failures, Lessons</u> (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 482-509.

defense of Egypt. Egyptian President Nasser's death in September 1970 did not lessen tensions with Israel. His successor, Anwar Sadat, committed himself to war with Israel if there was no progress toward a political solution. Sadat expelled almost all Soviet military advisors from Egypt in July 1972, a move apparently prompted by Soviet efforts to restrain Egypt from resorting to force against Israel and increasing Soviet domination of the Egyptian military. In October 1972 Sadat replaced the top military leadership and ordered the army to begin planning an offensive to seize the east bank of the Suez Canal. In early 1973, frustrated over lack of progress in the diplomatic arena, Sadat asked the Soviet Union to resume arms shipments to Egypt. The Soviets agreed, and the final Egyptian military build-up for war commenced.[456]

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[456] Mohamed Heikal, The Road to Ramadan (New York: Quadrangle, 1975), pp. 29-35, 46-206; Chaim Herzog, The War of Atonement (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975), 1-68; Henry Kissinger, White House Years (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1979), pp. 1298-1300; Henry Kissinger, Years of Upheaval (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1982), pp. 205-27. Also see John Bulloch, The Making of a War: The Middle East from 1967 to 1973 (London: Longman, 1974), pp. 166-87; The Insight Team of the London Sunday Times, The Yom Kippur War (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), pp. 63-129 (Cited hereafter as Insight Team); Lawrence L. Whetten, The Canal War (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1974), pp. 36-232; Jon D. Glassman, Arms for the Arabs: The Soviet Union and War in the Middle East (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), pp. 65-124; Galia Golan, Yom Kippur and After: The Soviet Union and the Middle East Crisis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 21-73; Alvin Z. Rubinstein, Red Star on the Nile (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 249-62; Shlomo Aronson, Conflict and Bargaining in the Middle East: An Israeli

The United States had offered a series of Middle East peace proposals, all of which were rejected. United States policy in 1972 and 1973 was designed to maintain a prolonged stalemate between Israel and her Arab neighbors, which Henry Kissinger believed would erode Soviet influence and perhaps move the Arab nations to seek improved relations with the United States. U.S. policy during this period assumed that Israeli military supremacy was the key to avoiding war in the Middle East, but this U.S. policy served only to exacerbate Arab-Israeli tensions. Tentative U.S.-Egyptian talks in early 1973 on an interim Israeli-Egyptian agreement made no progress, and Egypt decided to attempt a military solution to the stalemate.[457]

Perspective (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 135-54; Amnon Sella, Soviet Political and Military Conduct in the Middle East (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), pp. 72-83; George W. Breslauer, "Soviet Policy in the Middle East, 1967-1972: Unalterable Antagonism or Collaborative Competition?" in Alexander L. George, Managing U.S.-Soviet Rivalry: Problems of Crisis Prevention (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983), pp. 65-105; Galia Golan, "Soviet Decisionmaking in the Yom Kippur War, 1973," in Jiri Valenta and William C. Potter, eds., Soviet Decisionmaking for National Security (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1984), pp. 186-88, 192-98; Brecher, pp. 51-76.

[457] Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, pp. 205-27; William B. Quandt, Decade of Decisions: American Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1967-1976 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 128-129. Also see George, "Arab-Israeli War of October 1973," pp. 141-45; Bulloch, pp. 166-87; Aronson, pp. 154-59; Heikal, pp. 170-184; Harold H. Saunders, "Regulating Soviet-U.S. Competition and Cooperation in the Arab-Israeli Arena, 1967-86," in Alexander L. George, Philip J. Farley, and Alexander Dallin, eds., U.S.-Soviet Security Cooperation: Achievements, Failures, Lessons (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 554-564.

The Egyptian-Syrian strategy in the war was to inflict a decisive defeat on the Israeli standing army before Israel could mobilize its reserves, quickly seize strategic positions on the east bank of the Suez Canal and the Golan Heights, and prepare defensive positions for the inevitable Israeli counterattacks. Initial heavy attrition of Israeli forces and a quick U.N. ceasefire backed by the superpowers were expected to move the conflict to the bargaining table before Israel would be able to dislodge Egyptian and Syrian forces. Success in achieving these limited objectives would destroy Israel's image of military invulnerability, restore Arab confidence and pride, and increase Arab credibility and influence with the superpowers. These psychological and political victories, and possession of strategic positions in the Sinai and Golan Heights, would allow Egypt and Syria to negotiate from strength and force Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories on Arab terms.[458]

At 2:00 P.M. on October 6, 1973, Egypt attacked across the Suez Canal and Syria attacked the Golan Heights. They succeeded in achieving surprise and gaining ground on both fronts, inflicting heavy losses on Israeli ground and air forces. Beginning October 8 Israel counterattacked on both fronts, driving Syrian forces from the Golan Heights by October 10, but suffering a defeat in the Sinai. On

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[458] Safran, pp. 279-282; Dupuy, pp. 387-405; Insight Team, pp. 46-62; Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 460, 482.

October 11 Israel launched a counteroffensive against Syria and advanced into Syrian territory. Israeli forces met stiff resistance from Syrian forces (reinforced with Iraqi and Jordanian units), and on October 13 halted the offensive and consolidated defensive positions. There was only sporadic fighting on the Syrian front thereafter and on October 23 Syria agreed to the U.N. ceasefire.

On October 14, Egypt launched a major offensive in the Sinai in order to relieve Israeli pressure on Syria. Israel quickly halted the Egyptian offensive and launched a counteroffensive on October 15. Israeli armored units crossed the Suez Canal in small numbers on October 15 and 16, and in strength on October 17, threatening to cutoff Egyptian forces on the east bank of the canal. A U.N.-sponsored ceasefire was supposed to go into effect at 6:50 P.M. on October 22, but the fighting did not stop and Israeli forces continued advancing in Egypt. A second UN-sponsored ceasefire was set for 7:00 A.M. on October 24, but again the fighting failed to stop and Israel continued its offensive, surrounding the Egyptian Third Army. Each side blamed the other for the initial failure of these two ceasefires to take hold. On October 25 Israeli-Egyptian fighting tapered off and a fragile cease-fire held.[459]

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[459] Moshe Dayan, Story of My Life (New York: William Morrow, 1976), pp. 459-539; Herzog, pp. 68-250. Also see Zeev Schiff, October Earthquake: Yom Kippur 1973 (Tel Aviv:

Political-Strategic Context

Using the categories of crises presented in Chapter II, which distinguished between direct and indirect crises, the 1973 Arab-Israeli War was an indirect superpower crisis. The United States was brought into the confrontation through its support of Israel and the Soviet Union was brought into the confrontation through its support of Egypt and Syria. This meant that, in addition to controlling the actions of their own forces, the superpowers had to be concerned about the behavior of their clients. The period of greatest superpower tension in the crisis (October 24-25), resulted from actions taken by the local participants (primarily Israel) that contradicted arrangements made by the superpowers to resolve the crisis.

The United States had several objectives in the crisis: (a) to ensure the survival of Israel; (b) to preserve and strengthen U.S. credibility as a reliable ally in Israeli eyes, which was perceived to be important for gaining Israeli participation in post-war diplomacy; (c) to increase U.S. influence among the Arab nations--particularly Egypt--or at least reduce to a minimum the erosion of U.S. influence among moderate Arab nations that would result from

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University Publishing Project, 1974); Heikal, pp. 207-43; Safran, pp. 282-311; Dupuy, pp. 411-546; Brecher, pp. 171-229; Insight Team, pp. 133-246, 289-346, 383-98; Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, pp. 450-611; Whetten, pp. 233-84; Glassman, pp. 125-38.

U.S. support for Israel (and, if possible, avert an Arab oil embargo); (d) to reduce Soviet influence in the Middle East, or at least prevent an expansion of Soviet influence; (e) to terminate the war under circumstances conducive to negotiations leading toward at least a partial Middle East peace settlement, rather than just a ceasefire; (f) to avoid a direct confrontation with the Soviet Union that might escalate to a military clash; (g) to avoid unilateral actions that would unnecessarily erode detente while achieving only marginal advantages over the Soviets; and (h) to reduce to a minimum divisions between the U.S. and its allies (Western Europe and Japan) arising from the Middle East war. The priorities of these objectives shifted during the crisis as circumstances in the Middle East changed. Additionally, several of the goals tended to be contradictory, requiring extreme fine tuning of U.S. diplomatic initiatives and use of subtle signals that were easily missed or misinterpreted in the heat of the crisis.[460]

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[460] Henry Kissinger, "Secretary Kissinger's News Conference of October 12," Department of State Bulletin 69 (October 29, 1973): 534-35; Henry Kissinger, "Secretary Kissinger's News Conference of October 25," Department of State Bulletin 69 (November 12, 1973): 585-86; Richard M. Nixon, The Memoirs of Richard Nixon (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1978), p. 921-22; Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, pp. 467-68, 475, 478, 531; Quandt, Decade of Decisions, pp. 171-73, 184. Also see Safran, p. 478; Alan Dowty, Middle East Crisis: U.S. Decision-Making in 1958, 1970, and 1973 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 221-26, 231, 247, 274; Edward R.F. Sheehan, The Arabs, Israelis, and Kissinger: A Secret History of American Diplomacy in the Middle East (New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1976), pp.

The basic United States strategy was to achieve a ceasefire after Israel had repulsed the Egyptian and Syrian assaults, but before Israel could inflict a decisive, humiliating defeat on her neighbors (particularly Egypt). President Nixon and Secretary Kissinger believed this would create the most conducive circumstances for post-war diplomacy. The other major aspect of the U.S. strategy was to avoid a confrontation with the Soviet Union and to work in conjunction with the Soviets to resolve the crisis--at least to appear to be working with the Soviets while attempting to limit their role in the Middle East. This strategy remained consistent throughout the crisis, although the tactics used to pursue it changed significantly as U.S. perceptions of Israel's military situation changed.[461]

The primary Soviet objectives in the crisis were (a) to increase Soviet prestige and influence among Arab nations, particularly Egypt, and to reduce U.S. influence in the region; (b) to avert a catastrophic defeat of Syria and

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32-33, 53-55. Some observers also claim that U.S. leaders were concerned that Israel would use its nuclear weapons capability if threatened with a catastrophic defeat, and that the U.S. therefore had the objective of averting this possibility. See Dowty, pp. 244-45; Safran, p. 483; Aronson, pp. 178-79; Insight Team, pp. 282-84.

[461] Nixon, Memoirs, pp. 921-22; Kissinger, "News Conference of October 12," 535; Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, pp. 478, 490; Quandt, Decade of Decisions, pp. 171-173; Safran, p. 478; Dowty, pp. 216-17, 226-27, 294-96; Insight Team, p. 254; Edward N. Luttwak and Walter Laqueur, "Kissinger and the Yom Kippur War," Commentary 50 (September 1974): 38-39.

Egypt by Israel; (c) to avoid a direct confrontation with the United States that might escalate to a military clash; and (d) to avoid serious erosion of detente with the United States. Additional Soviet objectives, derived from those listed above, were to be able to take credit for Arab victories or for averting catastrophic defeat of Syria and Egypt, and to terminate the war under circumstances that would give the Soviet Union a central (or at lest a more important) role in post-war negotiations. The Soviet Union, like the United States, had complex and contradictory objectives. Attempting to maintain detente with the United States while increasing Soviet influence in the Middle East at the expense of the United States was a particularly difficult combination of objectives. It does not appear that the Soviet leaders believed, prior to the outbreak of the war, that another Arab-Israeli war would necessarily serve their interests in the Middle East. Rather, the Soviets appear to have sought what gains they could accrue from a conflict they could not avert without serious erosion of their influence among Arab nations.[462]

The Soviet strategy in the crisis had three basic elements. The first was to press for an early ceasefire

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[462] William B. Quandt, Soviet Policy in the October 1973 War, R-1864 (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1976), pp. 7-12; Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 469; Safran, p. 479; Galia Golan, "Soviet Decisionmaking," pp. 198-99, 202; Galia Golan, Yom Kippur and After, p. 74; Aronson, p. 183.

before the tide of battle turned against Egypt and Syria. At this point the Arab nations would have their greatest bargaining leverage against Israel. To curry favor with the Arab nations, the initial Soviet ceasefire proposal called for Israel to return to pre-1967 boundaries. The second element was to work in conjunction with the United States, rather than unilaterally, to gain a UN ceasefire resolution, to maintain at least an image of upholding the principles of detente, and to avoid excessive friction with the United States by not waging an intense anti-American propaganda campaign in the Middle East (as it had in past conflicts). The third element was to resupply Egypt and Syria with sufficient military equipment to maintain an image of solidarity with the Arab cause and to forestall a decisive Israeli victory. An additional, minor element in the Soviet strategy was to encourage other Arab nations to assist Egypt and Syria in the war against Israel. Jordan and Iraq sent troops to the Syrian front during the war, demonstrating at least some Arab solidarity.[463] The Soviet strategy was precarious and somewhat risky in that its three major elements could easily become mutually incompatible if events in the Middle East took an unexpected turn, which is exactly what happened.

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[463] Safran, p. 479; Galia Golan, Yom Kippur and After, pp. 126-27; Galia Golan, "Soviet Decision-making," pp. 199-202; Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 469; Rubinstein, pp. 262-63; Glassman, pp. 171-73.

Israel notified Washington that it had received warning of the impending attack about two hours before the Egyptians and Syrians struck. Kissinger warned the Israelis not to pre-empt and attempted to forestall the Arab attack. Israel did not preempt, but Egypt and Syria carried out their attacks. Initially, the United States was slow in pursuing a ceasefire in the UN Security Council, believing that Israel would soon turn the tide of battle. The United States maintained a low profile, evenhanded approach so as not to alienate the Arab nations. The United States also sought to act in conjunction with the Soviet Union, rather than unilaterally, in the UN Security Council. The initial U.S. proposal was to be for a ceasefire based on the status quo ante, timed to go into effect after Israel had repulsed the invading armies. The Soviets reportedly sought Egyptian agreement for a ceasefire in place as early as October 6, a proposal the Egyptians rejected. On October 7 the United States and the Soviet Union agreed in principle to a ceasefire and the Soviets reassured the United States that they would not unilaterally introduce a ceasefire resolution in the Security Council. Israel initially requested resupply of military equipment and munitions on October 7, a request approved by the United States later in the day.[464] Israel

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[464] "U.N. Calls for Middle East Cease-Fire and Negotiations and Establishes Emergency Force," Department of State Bulletin 69 (November 12, 1973): 598-99; Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, pp. 471-91; Dayan, p. 511; Quandt, Decade of

was to pick up the American supplies in the United States using unmarked El Al planes. Through October 8 U.S. leaders believed, based on Israeli reports, that Israel would soon prevail over Egypt and Syria and that low-profile resupply of Israel and evenhanded diplomacy were all the actions the U.S. needed to take.

Soviet-American tensions started rising during the October 9-12 period. Israel's resupply requests became more urgent on October 9 and Israel revealed that it had suffered massive losses of tanks and aircraft in the first three days of battle. On October 9 President Nixon approved Israel's requests for increased immediate resupply and post-war replacement of all Israeli battlefield losses, but for the next three days U.S. supplies were carried only in Israeli planes. The Soviet Union, which had been delivering military supplies to Syria by sealift from the start of the war, commenced an airlift to Syria on October 10 and commenced an airlift to Egypt the next day. Additionally, the Soviets made it clear that they would only support a

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<u>Decisions</u>, pp. 173-75. Also see Safran, pp. 479-80; Dowty, pp. 224-30; Heikal, p. 244; Galia Golan, <u>Yom Kippur and After</u>, pp. 74-86; Galia Golan, "Soviet Decision-making," pp. 199-201; Insight Team, pp. 268-74; Aronson, pp. 183-84; Marvin Kalb and Bernard Kalb, <u>Kissinger</u> (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1974), pp. 459-66; Matti Golan, <u>The Secret Conversations of Henry Kissinger: Step-by-Step Diplomacy in the Middle East</u> (New York: Bantam, 1976), pp. 33-48, 63-64; Robert O. Freedman, <u>Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East Since 1970</u>, Revised Edition (New York: Praeger, 1978), pp. 141-42; Rubinstein, pp. 262-67; Glassman, pp. 142-44.

ceasefire based on the Arab position, that is, a ceasefire in place linked with Israeli withdrawal to pre-1967 lines. The United States rejected this proposal and sought to delay UN action on a ceasefire until Israel gained the upper hand on the battlefield. On October 10 or 11, in response to Israeli advances into Syrian territory, the Soviet Union placed three airborne divisions on alert. The United States learned of this Soviet move on October 12. That same day Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin warned Kissinger that the Soviet Union might intervene if Israel continued advancing on Damascus. Kissinger, in turn, warned Dobrynin that the United States would resist Soviet intervention with force. Israel informed the United States on October 12 that it would accept a ceasefire in place, but preferred that the UN resolution not be voted on for another day. Israel also made an urgent plea for immediate resupply. In response, President Nixon ordered an airlift using U.S. military transport aircraft flying all the way to Israel.[465] October 12 thus marked the last day of the low key, evenhanded U.S. approach to the crisis.

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[465] Nixon, Memoirs, pp. 922-28; Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, pp. 491-515; Quandt, Decade of Decisions, pp. 176-82. Also see Safran, pp. 301, 480-83; Heikal, p. 245; Galia Golan, Yom Kippur and After, pp. 87-94; Galia Golan, "Soviet Decisionmaking," pp. 201-203; Quandt, Soviet Policy pp. 18-27; Kalb and Kalb, pp. 467-78; Sheehan, pp. 32-34, 56-57; Dowty, pp. 230-40, 264-66; Insight Team, pp. 274-81; Matti Golan, Secret Conversations, pp. 49-61, 65-67; Aronson, pp. 184-85; Rubinstein, pp. 267-70; Glassman, pp. 144-48.

The U.S. airlift to Israel commenced October 13 and the President directed that it be operated at maximum capacity. The United States also proposed to the Soviet Union a ceasefire in place linked to reaffirmation of UN Security Council Resolution 242, rather to Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories. On October 14 Egypt launched a major offensive in the Sinai in order to relieve pressure on Syria. Israel quickly halted the offensive, launched a counter-offensive on October 15, and sent troops across the Suez Canal in small numbers on October 16. Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin visited Egypt October 16 and urged Sadat to agree to a ceasefire in place. The next day the Soviet Union expressed to the United States its support for a ceasefire in place. The Arab oil exporting nations announced on October 17 a production cutback and price increase, to be followed by additional cutbacks until Israel withdrew from the occupied territories. Israeli armored units crossed the Suez Canal in strength on October 17. In response, the Soviet Union on October 18 began pressing for a ceasefire in place. Thus, as of October 18 the conditions that the United States had originally thought appropriate for a ceasefire were emerging.[466]

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[466] Nixon, p. 930; James Schlesinger, "Secretary of Defense Schlesinger's News Conference of October 26," Department of State Bulletin 69 (November 19, 1973): 624; Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, pp. 515-41; Quandt, Decade of Decisions, pp. 183-90. Also see Aronson, pp. 185-86; Galia Golan, Yom Kippur and After, pp. 94-112; Galia Golan,

On October 19 Brezhnev sent a message to Nixon inviting Kissinger to Moscow to discuss a Middle East ceasefire. Kissinger flew to Moscow early the next morning and held initial discussions with Brezhnev late on October 20. Meanwhile, the Nixon Administration on October 19 submitted a $2.2 billion dollar aid package for Israel to Congress. In response, Saudi Arabia announced on October 20 that it was joining the embargo on oil shipments to the United States--a serious setback for U.S. foreign policy. On October 21 Kissinger reached a ceasefire agreement with the Soviets, which was to presented to the UN Security Council that evening. The Soviet-American ceasefire proposal, Resolution 338, was passed by the Security Council at 12:50 A.M. on October 22. Kissinger left Moscow that morning for Israel to explain the Soviet-American agreement to Israeli leaders. The ceasefire was supposed to go into effect at 6:50 P.M. on October 22, but Israeli forces in Egypt continued advancing, allegedly after Egyptian violations of the ceasefire. On October 23 Israeli forces cut the final supply line to the Egyptian Third Army, totally surrounding it. In response, the Soviet Union placed four more airborne divisions on alert (a total of

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"Soviet Decisionmaking," pp. 203-206; Heikal, pp. 245-46; Safran, pp. 483-85; Insight Team, pp. 281-85, 367-72; Kalb and Kalb, pp. 479-83; Sheehan, pp. 34-35; Matti Golan, <u>Secret Conversations</u>, pp. 61-62, 67-73; Dowty, pp. 242-53, 266-68; Freedman, pp. 142-44; Rubinstein, pp. 270-74; Glassman, pp. 148-53.

seven alerted). A second UN-sponsored ceasefire was set for 7:00 A.M. on October 24, but Israel again continued its offensive, seizing key positions in Suez City and setting the stage for a superpower confrontation.[467]

Egypt requested U.S. and Soviet troops to enforce the ceasefire on October 24 after Israel surrounded the Egyptian Third Army. In response, Brezhnev sent a letter to Nixon threatening unilateral intervention if the U.S. refused to participate and the Soviet Union began assembling its seven alerted airborne divisions at airfields for immediate deployment. The United States rejected the Egyptian proposal and warned the Soviets against unilateral intervention. At 12:25 A.M. on October 25, the United States set DEFCON 3 worldwide and readied the 82nd Airborne Division for immediate deployment to the Middle East. Within hours the U.S. alert had been detected by the American press, which speculated on whether the move was warranted or motivated by domestic politics. On October 25 Israeli-Egyptian fighting tapered off and a fragile

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[467] Nixon, Memoirs, pp. 931-36; Kissinger, "News Conference of October 25," pp. 586-87; "U.N. Calls for Middle East Cease-Fire," Department of State Bulletin 69 (November 12, 1973): 599-602; Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, pp. 542-75; Quandt, Decade of Decisions, pp. 190-95. Also see Safron, pp. 310, 485-93; Heikal, pp. 247-54; Galia Golan, Yom Kippur and After, pp. 112-20; Galia Golan, "Soviet Decisionmaking," pp. 207-209; Insight Team, pp. 362-63, 372-74, 377-88; Kalb and Kalb, pp. 484-89; Sheehan, pp. 69-70; Matti Golan, Secret Conversations, pp. 74-89; Aronson, pp. 187-91; Freedman, pp. 144-45; Rubinstein, pp. 274-75; Glassman, pp. 153-59.

ceasefire held despite Israeli efforts to force surrender of the Egyptian Third Army by delaying passage of relief convoys. The Soviet Union dropped its threat of military intervention and proposed that Soviet and American representatives observe implementation of the ceasefire (a proposal that quietly died when Egypt decided it did not want superpower observers, even though the Soviets had sent a team of observers on October 24). U.S. forces quickly began standing down from DEFCON 3 and returning to normal peacetime DEFCON: the Southern Command and Alaskan Command at midnight on October 25, the Strategic Air Command and North American Air Defense Command on October 26, the Pacific Command and Readiness Command on October 27, and the Atlantic Command and U.S. European Command on October 30. Meanwhile, as of October 31 it appeared that the Soviet airborne divisions had also returned to normal peacetime readiness, thus greatly reducing the possibility of a superpower confrontation. The Sixth Fleet--the last U.S. command to stand down--returned to peacetime readiness on November 18.[468]

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[468] Richard M. Nixon, "President Nixon's News Conference of October 26," Department of State Bulletin 69 (November 12, 1973): 581, 583-84; Nixon, Memoirs, pp. 937-42; Kissinger, "News Conference of October 25," pp. 587-88, 592-93; Schlesinger, "News Conference of October 26," pp. 617-22; Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, pp. 575-99; "U.N. Calls for Middle East Cease-Fire," Department of State Bulletin 69 (November 12, 1973): 602-605; Quandt, Decade of Decisions, pp. 195-200; "Trapped Egyptian Force Held Key Factor in Crisis," New York Times, October 26, 1973, p. 1;

Command and Control

The military and naval chain of command in 1973 was the same as it had been in 1967: from the President, to the Secretary of Defense (James Schlesinger), to the unified commander (USCINCEUR), to the component commander (CINCUSNAVEUR), to the fleet commander (Commander Sixth Fleet), to the appropriate Task Force Commander (TF 60 for the attack carriers), to the appropriate Task Group Commander, and finally to individual ships. Admiral Thomas H. Moorer was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., was Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Worth H. Bagley was CINCUSNAVEUR, and Vice Admiral Daniel J. Murphy was Commander Sixth Fleet.

The principle advisory body during the crisis was the Washington Special Action Group (WSAG), a panel created by Kissinger within the National Security Council framework. The WSAG, formed in April 1969, was the Nixon Administration's principle crisis management body, serving a role

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"U.S. Forces Put on Worldwide Alert Lest Soviet Send Troops to Mideast," New York Times, October 26, 1973, p. 1; "U.S. Is Easing the Alert, But Links Step to Soviet," New York Times, October 27, 1973, p. 10; "Most Units Off Alert, Which May End Today," New York Times, October 28, 1973, p. 27; "Pentagon Declares Its Worldwide Alert of Military Is Over," New York Times, November 1, 1973, p. 19. Also see Safran, pp. 493-95; Heikal, pp. 254-61; Galia Golan, Yom Kippur and After, pp. 120-26; Galia Golan, "Soviet Decisionmaking," pp. 210-11; Kalb and Kalb, pp. 490-99; Insight Team, pp. 399-420; Matti Golan, Secret Conversations, pp. 90-107; Aronson, pp. 193-98; Dowty, pp. 255-60, 273-77; Rubinstein, pp. 275-77; Glassman, pp. 159-67.

similar to that of the EXCOMM in October 1962.[469] Kissinger was the principle link to the President, directly and through White House Chief of Staff Alexander Haig.

United States communications capabilities had improved significantly since 1967. The two major developments were automated message processing at communications centers ashore and satellite communications. Manual message processing, rather than radio propagation problems, typically caused the bulk of message transmission delays. Automated message processing and routing was being achieved through integration of Navy communications stations into the Naval Communications Processing and Routing System (NAVCOMPARS) and installation of the Common User Digital Information Exchange System (CUDIXS) at NAVCOMPARS master stations, which provided an automatic on-line interface with the Department of Defense's Automatic Digital Network (AUTODIN) message communications system.

The Navy satellite communications system was operational in 1973, but satellite communication terminals had been

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[469] WSAG membership varied, but generally included Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State and Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, James Schlesinger, Secretary of Defense, William Colby, CAI Director, Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, William Clements, Deputy Secretary of Defense, Kenneth Rush, Deputy Secretary of State, and, for meetings on the Middle East, Joseph Sisco, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs. Quandt, <u>Decade of Decisions</u>, p. 173.

installed in only a small number of key ships. In October 1973 the Sixth Fleet flagship, USS Little Rock (CLG 4), the aircraft carriers USS Franklin D. Roosevelt (CVA 42), USS Independence (CVA 62), and USS John F. Kennedy (CVA 67), and the amphibious command ship USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20) had satellite communications terminals. Satellite communications provided rapid, reliable encrypted teletype and secure (covered) voice channels to Navy NAVCOMPARS stations ashore and to the Department of Defense AUTODIN message system and Automatic Secure Voice Communications (AUTOSEVOCOM) system. If he shose to do so, the President in the White House had the capability to speak directly with Navy commanders embarked in ships equipped with satellite communications terminals. The remainder of the ships in the Sixth Fleet still relied on high frequency (HF) communications for long-range voice and radioteletype communications.[470]

President Nixon and his advisors used a combination of direct and delegated control over the Sixth Fleet during the

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[470] Commander Sixth Fleet, "Command History 1973," pp. V-1, V-5 (Declassified 1982. Command history files, Operational Archives, Naval Historical center, Washington, DC. Cited hereafter as Sixth Fleet, "Command History 1973."). Also see U.S. Congress, House Committee on Armed Services, Review of Department of Defense Worldwide Communications, Phase II, Hearings, 92nd Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1972), pp. 16490-95, 16499-502. Also see Blair, pp. 51-65; Carter, pp. 233-57; Head, Short and McFarlane, pp. 85-99; Lieutenant D.J. Marshall, "Communications and Command Prerogative," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 100 (January 1974): 31; Peter A. Mitchell, "The Navy's Mission in Space," Oceanus 28 (Summer 1985): 25.

1973 Arab-Israeli War. The only aspect of Sixth Fleet operations that was were under positive direct control by the White House was the location of the fleet in the Mediterranean. According to Admiral Moorer, JCS Chairman, "We only gave the Fleet general instructions as to the area to stay in."[471] However, most participants in the crisis recall White House control as being much closer than that. Admiral Zumwalt, CNO, states that there was extremely tight White House control of the fleet's location and movements in the Mediterranean: "The JCS felt they had to closely control the fleet because the Nixon-Kissinger political-military strategy closely controlled military operations. They used the fleet for their 'shadow boxing' with the Soviet Union. And there <u>was</u> close control of the Sixth Fleet by the JCS."[472] Vice Admiral Donald D. Engen, Deputy Commander in Chief of U.S. Naval Forces Europe, states that Washington's control of Sixth Fleet movements was "very restrictive" and that the Commander of the Sixth Fleet had to get JCS permission prior to ordering changes in the fleet's operations.[473] In addition to the overall effort to

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[471] Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, interview by author, February 9, 1988.

[472] Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, interview by author, February 16, 1988. Also see Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., <u>On Watch: A Memoir</u> (New York: Quadrangle, 1976), p. 436.

[473] Vice Admiral Donald D. Engen, letter to author, April 25, 1988. Also see Zumwalt, <u>On Watch</u>, p. 436.

signal the U.S. intention to stay out of the conflict, Sixth Fleet movements were used on October 25 to send a specific political signal to the Soviet Union--warning the Soviets not to intervene militarily on behalf of Egypt (This signal is discussed in greater detail below).

Other than movements of the fleet in the Mediterranean, control of Sixth Fleet operations was delegated to the chain of command. Admiral Moorer states that Washington did not try to micromanage Sixth Fleet operations and that he personally "tried to avoid nitpicking the commanders."[474] Admiral Zumwalt concurs: "In that aspect Nixon and Kissinger were quite rational. They let the chain of command handle operations."[475] Rear Admiral James B. Morin, Commanding Officer of USS _Franklin D. Roosevelt_ (CVA 42), and Rear Admiral John C. Dixon, Commanding Officer of USS _John F. Kennedy_ (CVA 67), both state that they did not feel the movements and operations of their carriers were micromanaged from Washington.[476] The overall pattern, then, was one of close control of Sixth Fleet movements in the Mediterranean and delegated control of all other aspects of Sixth Fleet operations.

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[474] T.H. Moorer, interview by author, February 9, 1988.

[475] Zumwalt, interview by author, February 16, 1988.

[476] Rear Admiral James B. Morin, letter to author, April 14, 1988; Rear Admiral John C. Dixon, letter to author, April 18, 1988.

Although the White House sought to control the movements of the Sixth Fleet for political signalling, the chain of command was used for transmitting orders to the Sixth Fleet. Nixon and Schlesinger did not attempt to give orders directly to CINCUSNAVEUR, COMSIXTHFLT, or ships at sea.[477] The White House Situation Room was unable to monitor Sixth Fleet operations real-time. As in 1967, the President and Secretary of Defense had to await verbal reports from USCINCEUR and CINCUSNAVEUR, or receipt of message operational reports (OPREPs), situation reports (SITREPs), and operational summaries (OPSUMs). The primary difference from 1967 was that these reports generally could reach the White House much faster than in 1973 (though still not fast enough for effective real-time control of fleet operations).

Nixon, Schlesinger, and Kissinger paid little attention to the guidance contained in mechanisms of delegated control, and did not use those mechanisms to issue detailed operational guidance to the Sixth Fleet. No special rules of engagement were issued during the crisis: the Sixth Fleet used standing CINCUSNAVEUR and COMSIXTHFLT rules.[478]

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[477] Zumwalt, interview by author, February 16, 1988; Engen, letter to author, April 25, 1988.

[478] T.H. Moorer, interview by author, February 9, 1988; Engen, letter to author, April 25, 1988; Vice Admiral Joe P. Moorer, Commander Carrier Group Six and commander of the Kennedy carrier task group, letter to author, April 18, 1988; Morin, letter to author, April 14, 1988; Dixon, letter to author, April 18, 1988.

Admiral Zumwalt states, "Nixon and Kissinger did not get into that level of detail with military operations. General rules of engagement were spelled out in the JCS, with overall approval coming from Kissinger. From time-to-time we received injunctions on things we couldn't do."[479] Similarly, it does not appear that any special mis-sion orders (OPLANs or OPORDs) were issued for the crisis, other than for support of the U.S. airlift to Israel.

Contingency plans did not play a major role in the execution of U.S. naval operations during the crisis. Kissinger states that on May 15, 1973, he requested a contingency plan covering "the kinds of things the Egyptians might do, the various ways in which the Israelis might react and the diplomatic issues that might ensue," but that this contingency study was not completed before the war broke out.[480] The United States did not have contingency plans for emergency resupply of Israel while a war was in progress: American planners expected any future Arab-Israeli war to be short and end in a decisive Israeli victory, thus limiting the U.S. role to replacement of Israeli battlefield losses <u>after</u> the war.[481] William

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[479] Zumwalt, interview by author, February 16, 1988. The injunctions were restrictions on the Sixth Fleet's movements, described in greater detail below.

[480] Kissinger, <u>Years of Upheaval</u>, p. 462; Quandt, <u>Decade of Decisions</u>, p. 167.

[481] Kissinger, <u>Years of Upheaval</u>, pp. 492-97.

B. Quandt states that on October 25, "The president ordered Kissinger to develop a plan for sending United States troops to the Middle East in case the Soviets did intervene."[482] This plan was never executed because the Soviets backed down from a confrontation later that day. The United States also had contingency plans for various types of military operations in the Middle East, such as evacuation of American citizens, but none were executed.

The most important mechanism of delegated control during the crisis was the U.S. alert system. In response to the Soviet threat to intervene militarily on behalf of Egypt, the United States set DEFCON 3 worldwide early on October 25.[483] Admiral Moorer promptly informed the unified

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[482] Quandt, Decade of Decisions, pp. 198-99.

[483] There is disagreement as to the exact time of the alert. Schlesinger states that the decision on "enhanced readiness status" was made at 11:30 P.M. on October 24 during a WSAG meeting. The London Sunday Times Insight Team states that Admiral Moorer issued the DEFCON 3 order at 11:35 P.M. Kissinger states that DEFCON 3 was set at 11:41 P.M. on October 24. Admiral Moorer states that he arrived at the White House at about midnight and DEFCON 3 was set shortly thereafter. Admiral Zumwalt states that DEFCON 3 was set worldwide at 12:25 A.M. on October 25. Nixon stated in his October 26 press conference that the alert was ordered "shortly after midnight Thursday morning [October 25]". Quandt states that the first orders for the alert were issued at about midnight and that the scope of the alert was widened at 1:30 A.M. on October 25. See Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, pp. 587-91; Moorer, interview by author, February 9, 1988; Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 443; Quandt, Decade of Decisions, pp. 196-98; Insight Team, p. 413. The most likely sequence of events was that the decision to set DEFCON 3 was made at about 11:30 P.M. on October 24 during the WSAG meeting. Secretary of Defense Schlesinger issued an initial order for the alert at 11:41

and specified commanders of the limited (primarily political) purpose of the alert. Setting DEFCON 3 had little effect on the Sixth Fleet, which was already at a high condition of readiness. The threat of Soviet military intervention soon subsided and U.S. forces quickly returned to normal peacetime readiness.[484]

Naval Operations

The Soviet Mediterranean Squadron had steadily increased in size since the 1967 Middle East War, and in 1972 and 1973 usually numbered between 43 and 61 ships. The

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P.M. He may have issued verbal alert orders to specific commands. More likely, however, is that he gave NMCC a warning that DEFCON 3 orders would soon be issued (which would have placed NMCC and WWMCCS at increased readiness for the impending alert). Schlesinger then waited until he could consult with Admiral Moorer before issuing alert orders. The message order setting DEFCON 3 worldwide was sent at 12:25 a.m. on October 25. At 1:25 A.M., specific orders were issued to the Sixth Fleet (described below) and the 82nd airborne division was alerted for immediate deployment to the Middle East.

[484] Moorer, interview by author, February 9, 1988; Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, pp. 587-91; Quandt, Decade of Decisions, pp. 196-98; "U.S. Forces Put on Worldwide Alert Lest Soviet Send Troops to Mideast," New York Times, October 26, 1973, p. 1; "Kissinger Says Action is Expression of Policy," New York Times, October 26, 1973, p. 20; "Nixon's Motives in alert Questioned and Defended," New York Times, October 26, 1973, p. 20. Also see Scott D. Sagan, "Lessons of the Yom Kippur Alert," Foreign Policy No. 36 (Fall 1979): 160-77; Sagan, "Nuclear Alerts," pp. 122-28; Bruce Hurwitz, "Threat Perception, Linkage Politics and Decision Making: The October 1973 Worldwide Alert of US Military Forces," Jerusalem Journal of International Relations 7 (1985): 135-44; Dowty, pp. 256-58, 274-77; Steinbruner, "An Assessment of Nuclear Crises," p. 43.

Soviet squadron typically consisted of 8-10 torpedo-armed attack submarines (some nuclear-powered); 2-3 anti-ship cruise missile-armed submarines (some nuclear-powered); 2-4 cruisers, some armed with anti-ship cruise missiles; 9-12 destroyers, frigates, and corvettes, some armed with AAW guided missiles or anti-ship cruise missiles; 2-3 minesweepers (used for patrol and surveillance); 1-3 amphibious ships, normally carrying naval infantry; 18-20 auxiliary ships, including oilers, supply ships, and tenders; and 5-6 research vessels and intelligence collection ships (AGIs). The Soviets routinely deployed their most modern vessels to the Mediterranean Squadron, making it the most capable Soviet naval force outside Soviet home waters.[485]

Between 1967 and 1973 the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron increased the scope and tempo of its operations, conducting larger and more sophisticated naval exercises, but Soviet ships still spent well over half their time at anchor. Most of the Soviet squadron was kept in the eastern Mediterranean, with surveillance patrols monitoring the Strait of Gibralter (including the U.S. naval base at Rota, Spain) and the Strait of Sicily. The Soviets relied heavily

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[485] Commander Sixth Fleet, "Command History 1973," pp. VI-1 to VI-7; Admiral Isaac C. Kidd, Jr., "View From the Bridge of the Sixth Fleet Flagship," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 98 (February 1972): 18-29; Milan Vego, "Moscow's Quest for Naval Facilities in the Mediterranean," Defense and Foreign Affairs Digest, December 1979, pp. 10-15; Weinland, p. 76; Watson, pp. 90-99.

on ports in Egypt and Syria for logistic support of the Mediterranean Squadron. Soviet ships began using the Egyptian port of Alexandria as a base in October 1967 and Soviet naval aircraft began using Egyptian airfields in May 1968. In 1969 the Soviet navy began developing a naval base at Mersa Matruh, Egypt, and by 1970 was using a total of six Egyptian airfields for its naval aircraft. The Soviet navy began routinely using the Syrian ports of Latakia and Tartus in March 1968, and in May 1972 the Syrians agreed to Soviet construction of naval facilities in those ports. Beginning in March 1970 Soviet naval aircraft flying out of Egypt were allowed to refuel in Algeria, extending their range to the western Mediterranean. Egyptian expulsion of Soviet military advisors in July 1972 had no effect on Soviet use of Egyptian ports, but caused Soviet naval aircraft to be transferred from Egypt to Syria. The Soviets also used several anchorages in international waters. Most important were the Kithira anchorage off the southern tip of Greece, an anchorage off the eastern tip of Crete, and the Sollum anchorage off the coast of Egypt. Also frequently used were an anchorage northeast of Cyprus, the Hammamet anchorage off the coast of Algeria (for the Strait of Sicily patrol), and the Alboran Island anchorage just east of the Strait of Gibralter (for the Gibralter patrol).[486]

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[486] Ibid; A.J. Baker, The Yom Kippur War (New York: Random House, 1974), pp. 23-25.

Soviet-American naval interactions became much less tense and dangerous in the Mediterranean between 1967 and 1973. Dangerous Soviet maneuvers near U.S. warships and formations had been a growing problem since 1960, reaching severe intensity in the Mediterranean and the Sea of Japan in 1967. The Soviet navy policy of harassing U.S. naval formations continued to be a serious problem through 1969. From 1970 onward, reflecting the improvement in Soviet-American relations under the Nixon Administration, the frequency and severity of naval incidents at sea declined somewhat. During the Jordanian crisis in September 1970, the Soviet navy slightly reinforced its Mediterranean Squadron (which rose from 52 to 72 ships) and closely monitored U.S. naval operations, but did not provoke any incidents with U.S. ships. In the words of Admiral Isaac C. Kidd, Commander Sixth Fleet during the crisis: "The two fleets gave no evidence of undue stress. Both sides operated in a normal and restrained manner. There was none of the nonsense of their ships running in and around our men-of-war at close range."[487] Nevertheless, incidents at sea continued to occur and remained a cause for concern in the U.S. Navy. The Incidents at Sea Agreement, signed in 1972,

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[487] Kidd, p. 27. On U.S. and Soviet naval operations in the Jordanian crisis, see Zumwalt, On Watch, pp. 292-301; Kidd, pp. 25-28; Watson, pp. 97-99; Thomas A. Bryson, "The Projection of U.S. Naval Power in the 1970 Jordan Crisis," in Craig L. Symonds, ed., New Aspects of Naval History (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1981), pp. 313-21.

further lessened tensions at sea. Although incidents were not entirely eliminated, both navies largely complied with the agreement and there was a significant drop in the most dangerous Soviet maneuvering practices.[488] By 1973, according to Vice Admiral Engen, the U.S. and Soviet navies had grown accustomed to operating close to one another.[489] Admiral Worth Bagley, CINCUSNAVEUR, provided this assessment after the crisis: "In fact the Soviets weren't overtly aggressive. It looked as though they were taking some care not to cause an incident. On the whole, their overt posture was restrained and considerate."[490] This improvement in Soviet-American relations at sea was an important reason for the lack of naval incidents in October 1973.

Soviet naval involvement in the 1973 Arab-Israeli War began with sealifts of Moroccan troops to Syria in April and July. Two Soviet tank landing ships (LSTs) and a freighter arrived in Oran, Morocco, on April 13. The LSTs departed on April 15 escorted by a Kashin-class guided missile destroyer, and the freighter departed April 18. In the eastern Mediterranean the three ships were escorted by a Kynda-class

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[488] Vice Admiral Gerald E. Miller, "As I Recall . . . Sailing with the Soviets in the Med," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 111 (January 1985): 60-61; Morin, letter to author, April 14, 1988; Hilton, pp. 30-31.

[489] Engen, letter to author, April 25, 1988.

[490] Quoted in Galia Golan, Yom Kippur and After, p. 109. Also see Glassman, p. 162.

cruiser and a Riga-class destroyer. The three ships arrived in the Syrian port of Tartus on April 25. Two more LSTs arrived in Oran on July 7, loaded Moroccan troops and tanks, departed on July 9, and arrived in Tartus on July 15.[491] These two sealifts were symbolic Soviet support for pan-Arab unity against Israel.

The Soviets took several naval actions on October 5. A Polnocny-class medium landing ship (LSM) and Riga-class frigate evacuated civilians from Port Said, Egypt (The Soviets had begun evacuating civilians from Egypt and Syria by air on October 3). Two intelligence collection ships (AGIs) and two minesweepers were moved into the eastern Mediterranean to augment the single AGI on patrol there. Five Foxtrot-class conventional attack submarines arrived in the Mediterranean for routine rotation of the submarines on patrol, but the five submarines that were supposed to return home were kept on station to augment the submarine force. A new Kara-class ASW cruiser, carrying the Commander of the Black Sea Fleet on a port visit to Split, Yugoslavia, departed the Mediterranean for the Black Sea on October 5.[492]

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[491] Commander Sixth Fleet, "Command History 1973," pp. VI-4, VI-6; Dismukes, pp. 491-93; Robert G. Weinland, "Superpower Naval Diplomacy in the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War: A Case Study," The Washington Papers, Vol. VI (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1979), p. 61.

[492] Commander Sixth Fleet, "Command History 1973," pp. VI-7, VI-8; Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 469, 475; "U.S. Aides See Eventual Israeli Victory," New York Times, October 10, 1973, p. 1; Quandt, p. 173; Weinland, pp. 63-64, 78-79;

When war broke out on October 6, the Soviet "Fifth Eskadra" (Mediterranean Squadron) consisted of about 57 ships, including eleven submarines (two armed with anti-ship cruise missiles), one Kynda-class cruiser (armed with SS-N-3 anti-ship cruise missiles), one Sverdlov-class cruiser (guns only), three Kashin-class and two Kotlin-class guided missile destroyers (armed with AAW missiles), two Kotlin-class destroyers (guns only), nine frigates and corvettes (Petya, Mirka, and Riga classes, armed only with guns), two Polnocny-class medium landing ships (LSMs), two minesweepers, and several auxiliary vessels. The ships and submarines armed with anti-ship cruise missiles could launch a total of about twenty missiles in their first salvo (a rough measure of the threat to the U.S. carriers). Most of the Soviet ships were conducting routine peacetime operations, with the majority of them anchored at normal Soviet anchorages in the vicinity of Crete or in Egyptian ports.[493]

On October 6 there was a total of 48 U.S. Navy ships in the Mediterranean. Task Force 60, the carrier strike force, consisted of two attack carrier Task Groups: Task Group 60.1, the USS Independence (CVA 62) attack carrier

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Watson, p. 103; Stephen S. Roberts, "The October 1973 Arab-Israeli War," in Bradford Dismukes and James McConnell, eds., Soviet Naval Diplomacy (New York: Pergamon Press, 1979), p. 198.

[493] Commander Sixth Fleet, "Command History 1973," p. VI-7; Weinland, 79; Watson, p. 103; Roberts, pp. 193-94.

group, was at anchor at Athens, Greece. Task Group 60.2, the USS Franklin D. Roosevelt (CVA 42) attack carrier group, was in various Spanish ports. Most of Task Force 61, an amphibious task force consisting of the helicopter carrier USS Guadalcanal (LPH 7) and nine other amphibious ships, was in various Greek ports. A Marine battalion landing team, augmented with additional troops for an exercise (a total of about 3,000 Marines), was embarked in the amphibious group. The Sixth Fleet flagship, USS Little Rock (CLG 4), was at sea south of Crete. Four nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs) were on patrol in the Mediterranean. In the Atlantic, the attack carrier USS John F. Kennedy (CVA 67) and her escorts were visiting Edinburgh, Scotland, after participating in a NATO exercise in the Norwegian Sea.[494]

Egypt and Syria declared substantial areas of the eastern Mediterranean off their coasts to be war zones on October 6. The United States kept the Sixth Fleet well clear of these war zones throughout the war. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, conducted significant naval operations in these war zones. During the war the Soviets concentrated amphibious ships and combatants off the coasts of Syria and Egypt despite the battles the Egyptian and

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[494] Commander Sixth Fleet, "Command History 1973," p. III-5, III-10; Zumwalt, On Watch, pp. 436-37; J.P. Moorer, letter to author, April 18, 1988; Weinland, pp. 69-70; Roberts, p. 197; F.C. Miller, "Those Storm-beaten Ships, Upon Which the Arab Armies Never Looked," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 101 (March 1975): 22-23; Glassman, p. 162.

Syrian navies were fighting with the Israeli Navy, which created a danger of Soviet naval vessels being attacked inadvertently in the heat of battle (Almost all of the engagements were fought at night).[495]

The only significant Soviet naval activity during the first two days of the war was the evacuation of Soviet personnel from Egypt and Syria. A Soviet Polnocny-class LSM evacuated civilians from Port Said on October 6, proceeded to Alexandria, and left there with more Soviet citizens on October 7. Meanwhile, the Soviet LSM and frigate that departed Port Said on October 5 visited the Syrian port of Latakia on October 6, probably to pick up Soviets evacuating Syria. Interestingly, Soviet Navy auxiliary vessels (tenders and supply ships) remained in Alexandria throughout the war. Additionally, Soviet minesweepers and AGIs in the eastern Mediterranean commenced surveillance patrols on October 6: an AGI escorted by a minesweeper off the coast of Israel, and an AGI escorted by a minesweeper off the coast of Syria. Soviet Tu-16 Badger reconnaissance bombers closely monitored the Sixth Fleet. The bulk of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron continued routine peacetime operations during the first two days of the war.[496]

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[495] Weinland, p. 81; Dupuy, p. 562.

[496] Commander Sixth Fleet, "Command History 1973," pp. VI-7, VI-8; Zumwalt, <u>On Watch</u>, p. 437; Weinland, pp. 80-81; Roberts, p. 198; Glassman, p. 162.

The first United States military response to the war was to deploy an attack carrier task group at sea in the eastern Mediterranean. At 9:00 A.M. on October 6, Kissinger asked Scowcroft to obtain a plan to move the U.S. Sixth Fleet into the eastern Mediterranean and plans to reinforce the Sixth Fleet if necessary. The decision to move a carrier into the eastern Mediterranean was made during an evening WSAG meeting and at 9:46 P.M. the JCS ordered *Independence* and her escorts to get underway from Athens and proceed to an operating area south of Crete. *Independence* and her three escorts got underway from Athens on October 7 and proceeded to an area south of Crete. On October 8 Task Force 61, the Sixth Fleet amphibious force, was ordered to proceed to Souda Bay Crete and anchor there. The amphibious force remained anchored at Souda Bay through October 25. *Independence* arrived in the operating area south of Crete on October 8, joining *Little Rock*, the Sixth Fleet flagship.[497]

These Sixth Fleet movements were made primarily for purposes of political signaling. President Nixon reportedly wanted the Sixth Fleet moved into the eastern Mediterranean "as a visible sign of American power."[498] Kissinger

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[497] Commander Sixth Fleet, "Command History 1973," p. III-9; Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, pp. 455, 475; Quandt, *Decade of Decisions*, p. 171; "Ships of Sixth Fleet Sail Under Alert," *New York Times*, October 8, 1973, p. 16; "US Warships Sail from Greece Unexpectedly," *The Times* (London), October 8, 1973, p. 6; Roberts, p. 196; Weinland, p. 69.

[498] Quandt, *Decade of Decisions*, p. 171.

describes the signals being sent with the Sixth Fleet as more subtle and complex. The designated holding area south of Crete was "a position that the Soviets would read as indicating that the United States was preparing for any contingency--close enough for us to act in an emergency, far enough to bespeak no aggressive intent. The rest of our fleet lay farther west; we would be able to indicate heightened concern by moving it off Cyprus."[499] The low key, evenhanded approach being pursued by the Nixon Administration, was reflected in the operational guidance provided to the Sixth Fleet. According to Vice Admiral Daniel Murphy, Commander of the Sixth Fleet: "To project this attitude, the Sixth Fleet was directed to continue routine, scheduled operations and to avoid overt moves which might be construed as indicating the United States was preparing to take an active part in the conflict."[500] The Sixth Fleet was thus being used as a political instrument from the first day of the crisis.

The Soviet Mediterranean Squadron generally continued normal peacetime operations during the October 6-13 period. A Soviet AGI monitored the U.S. naval base at Rota, Spain, a combatant patrolled just inside the Straits of Gibralter, and two frigates patrolled the Straits of Sicily and

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[499] Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 475. Also see Weinland, p. 72; Quandt, Decade of Decisions, p. 171.

[500] Quoted in Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 435.

Messina. Most Soviet surface combatants were at anchorages near Crete and most Soviet attack submarines remained in the western Mediterranean. On October 7 a Kashin-class destroyer began trailing Independence as it left Athens, a routine form of Soviet peacetime surveillance.[501] Vice Admiral Murphy reported that there was little threat to the Sixth Fleet during October 6-13:

> Soviet units in the vicinity of the [U.S.] Task Group holding area south of Crete during the period neither represented a severe threat nor gave indications of an increased state of readiness. One conventional attack submarine and two cruise missile firing submarines were in the general area but coordination with Soviet surface units was infrequent and sporadic. Therefore, COMSIXTHFLT did not perceive SOVMEDFLT [Soviet Mediterranean Fleet] a threat to successful completion of any of the perceived missions during Phase I [October 6-13].[502]

Soviet-American tactical-level naval interaction in the Mediterranean began increasing on October 9. That day a Soviet Kynda-class cruiser and an Ugra-class submarine tender, serving as the flagship for the commander of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron, joined the Kashin trailing the Independence and Little Rock, forming an anti-carrier group. Also on October 9 a Soviet AGI began monitoring the U.S. amphibious group at Souda Bay, remaining with it through October 25. Soviet Tu-16 Badger reconnaissance bombers continued to be active over the Mediterranean, but

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[501] Ibid, pp. 437, 447; Commander Sixth Fleet, "Command History 1973," pp. VI-7, VI-8; Roberts, p. 196.

[502] Quoted in Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 437.

still did not harass the Sixth Fleet.[503] Stephen S. Roberts has suggested that the increase in Soviet ships trailing Independence may have been "a symbolic warning against possible Sixth Fleet interference with the airlift and sealift the Soviets were about to undertake to Syria."[504] If so, it was the first political signal sent by the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron related to how the United States might employ the Sixth Fleet in the crisis.

Soviet tattletales do more than just monitor the movements and operations of the U.S. warships they trail, they provide near real-time targeting data to Soviet ships, aircraft, and submarines armed with anti-ship cruise missiles. *The presence of* a Soviet tattletale warns a U.S. Navy commander that his ships are constantly targeted for preemptive attack should the Soviets elect to launch one. Soviet tattletales are even more dangerous when they are themselves armed with anti-ship missiles. This provides the Soviets with the option of a preemptive strike that provides virtually no warning time for the U.S. fleet to defend itself.[505]

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[503] Ibid; Watson, p. 106; Roberts, p. 196; Glassman, p. 162.

[504] Roberts, p. 196. Also see Galia Golan, "Soviet Decisionmaking," p. 202.

[505] For a discussion of the tattletale problem, see William H. Gregory, "Their Tattletales (Our Problem)," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 110 (February 1984): 97-99.

The Sixth Fleet had experienced Soviet tattletales in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and anti-ship missile-armed Soviet tattletales in the 1970 Jordanian Crisis. In the 1970 crisis Soviet ships armed with anti-ship missiles trailed the three U.S. carriers in the Mediterranean around the clock. To counter this threat, the Sixth Fleet assigned ships armed with rapid fire guns to trail Soviet warships armed with anti-ship missiles. Admiral Zumwalt has explained why both sides ended up closely trailing each other's warships:

> All this trailing is an effort to compensate for tactical asymmetries. A carrier outside the range of the cruise missiles on Soviet ships can clearly sink them easily with her aircraft. Therefore, the Russians trail us closely in order to be able to destroy most of a carrier's planes or disable the carrier herself before aircraft can take off. We adopted the retaliatory technique of trailing the trailer so as to prevent them from preventing us from launching our planes by knocking out most of their cruise missiles before many of them took off.[506]

This U.S. tactic was used again in 1973. Each of the U.S. carriers would assign a destroyer or cruiser (what were then called frigates) to each of the Soviet tattletales that had weapons capable of threatening the carrier. The U.S. ship would attempt to maintain a blocking position between the Soviet warship and the U.S. carrier, keeping the Soviet warship within range of its guns or missiles (the U.S. Navy did not have anti-ship missiles in 1973, but certain AAW

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[506] Zumwalt, On Watch, pp. 300-301.

missiles could be used against surface ships). To cover Soviet ships armed with long range anti-ship missiles, which usually trailed at greater ranges, the U.S. carriers used the "anti-surface combat air patrol" (SUCAP) tactic. The U.S. carriers launched aircraft armed with conventional air-to-surface bombs and missiles to monitor the Soviet warships. The objective of the U.S. ships and planes shadowing Soviet warships was to prevent them from launching their anti-ship missiles against the U.S. carriers, which obviously would have required taking the Soviet ships under fire before they had launched their weapons.[507] Thus, the ships of the Sixth Fleet and Soviet Mediterranean Squadron were constantly maneuvering for tactical advantage against each other, attempting to be in a favorable position to instantly strike the first blow in the event of hostilities.

The Roosevelt carrier task group got underway from Barcelona on October 10 and remained at sea in the western Mediterranean.[508] The same day three Soviet ships--a Sverdlov-class cruiser, a Kotlin-class DDG, and a Kashin-class DDG--entered the Mediterranean for a port visit to

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[507] Commander Sixth Fleet, "Command History 1973," p. III-4; Dixon, letter to author, April 18, 1988; Watson, p. 116; Miller, "Storm-beaten Ships," p. 24; Zumwalt, On Watch, pp. 300-301. Very little information is available on U.S. and Soviet submarine operations during the 1973 crisis, but it is safe to assume that tactical maneuvering similar to that on the surface was also taking place under the seas.

[508] Commander Sixth Fleet, "Command History 1973," p. III-5; Weinland, p. 69; Roberts, p. 196.

Taranto, Italy. Interestingly, these three Soviet ships apparently did not participate in Soviet naval activities directed against the Sixth Fleet until after their port visit.[509] On October 10 the Soviet Union commenced an airlift to Syria and the next day commenced an airlift to Egypt. Meanwhile, Soviet cargo ships had been carrying supplies to Syria and Egypt from the beginning of the war. Five Soviet cargo ships delivered supplies during the October 7-12 period. Three Soviet cargo ships entered the Mediterranean from the Black Sea on October 13, and during October 14-19 up to two Soviet cargo ships a day passed through the Turkish Straits en route to Egyptian and Syrian ports. A total of nine Soviet ships proceeded to Egypt and Syria during the October 20-22 period. The total tonnage delivered by the Soviet sealift between October 7 and October 23 is estimated to have been about 63,000 tons. Although the Soviet sealift tapered off after October 23, it continued through about November 1.[510]

On October 11 the JCS ordered the Kennedy group to depart Scotland on October 13 and proceed to a point in the Atlantic west of Gibralter to support the U.S. airlift to Israel. This diverted the Kennedy group from an expected

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[509] Weinland, pp. 81, 83; Roberts, p. 193.

[510] Commander Sixth Fleet, "Command History 1973," pp. VI-7, VI-8; Glassman, pp. 130-31; Roberts, p. 200. On the Soviet airlift, see Quandt, Soviet Policy, pp. 23-26; Galia Golan, Yom Kippur and After, pp. 85-89.

return voyage to the United States. The same day, the JCS ordered the helicopter carrier USS Iwo Jima (LPH 2), with Battalion Landing Team 3/8 embarked (approximately 2,000 troops), deployed to the Mediterranean. On October 12 Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin delivered a note from the Soviet Government protesting the deployment of the Sixth Fleet to the eastern Mediterranean. Later that day Kissinger told the Israeli ambassador that the United States would move a third carrier into the Mediterranean, probably referring to the Kennedy. The Soviet protest note and Kissinger's promise of a third U.S. carrier both illustrate the political role of naval forces in the crisis.[511]

The night of October 10-11 Israeli missile boats attacked several targets on the Syrian coast, including the ports of Latakia and Tartus, and a battle was fought with Syrian missile boats at Latakia. Israeli Saar-class fast patrol boats fired Gabriel anti-ship missiles at Syrian missile boats maneuvering among civilian merchant ships, sinking a Japanese freighter and a Greek freighter as well as two Syrian missile boats. Israeli missile boats raided the Syrian port of Tartus again the night of October 11-12. Two more Syrian missile boats were sunk, but so was the Soviet merchant ship Ilya Mechnikov. Israel expressed

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[511] Commander Sixth Fleet, "Command History 1973," p. III-5; Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 436; "Another U.S. Ship Sent," New York Times, October 12, 1973, p. 18; Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, pp. 509-10; Weinland, p. 70.

regret for sinking the Soviet ship and claimed its forces had orders not to attack civilian vessels.[512] Bruce Watson noted suspicions that the Israeli attacks on Soviet vessels may not have been accidental:

> Israel's survival depended on persuading the United States to replace the Israeli losses of equipment and consumables, perhaps even by independent action against the Soviet supply line, which would threaten to precipitate a major clash between the United States and the Soviet Union. Whether this was the Israeli intent on the night of October 11-12 is still shrouded in controversy.[513]

In a message delivered to the U.S. on October 12, the Soviet Union protested the Israeli sinking of its merchant ship and warned that "The Soviet Union will of course take measures

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[512] "Israel Is Accused in U.N. of Sinking a Soviet Ship," New York Times, October 13, 1973, p. 1; "3 Freighters Sunk," New York Times, October 13, 1973, p. 1; Galia Golan, "Soviet Decisionmaking," p. 203; Schiff, p. 167; Dupuy, p. 559; Weinland, p. 81; Watson, p. 106; Roberts, p. 201. Israel apparently was not alone in sinking civilian ships during the war: Egyptian submarines allegedly sank two Greek freighters in the Mediterranean. See Herzog, pp. 263-64. On Arab-Israeli naval battles in the 1973 war, see Rear Admiral Shlomo Erell, "Israeli Saar FPBs Pass Combat Test In Yom Kippur War," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 100 (September 1974): 115-18; Martin J. Miller, Jr., "The Israeli Navy: 26 Years of Non-Peace," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 101 (February 1975): 49-54; Dupuy, pp. 557-65; Herzog, pp. 261-69.

[513] Watson, p. 106. Israel also destroyed several Soviet transport aircraft on Syrian airfields during raids on October 10 and 11. Weinland, p. 81; Glassman, p. 130. Although the destruction of the Soviet transport planes and the sinking of the Soviet merchant ship could well have been accidents, the attacks on the Syrian airfields and ports being used for the Soviet airlift and sealift were certainly deliberate. This does not necessarily indicate an Israeli effort to disrupt the the Soviet airlift and sealift--the airfields and ports were important targets for other reasons as well.

which it will deem necessary to defend its ships and other means of transportation."[514]

The Soviets placed two LSMs off Syria on October 12, probably on standby in the event it became necessary to evacuate Soviet personnel and sensitive equipment. One of the LSMs remained there through 17 October, the other through 25 October. On October 13, probably in response to Israeli attacks on Soviet merchant ships, the Soviets placed a Kashin-class DDG off the Syrian coast. Two Soviet LSTs entered the Mediterranean from the Black Sea on October 14 and proceeded to Syria on a resupply mission. A Soviet Kotlin-class DDG joined the Kashin-class DDG off the Syrian coast on October 15 to provide increased protection for Soviet ships and aircraft resupplying Syria.[515]

On October 13 the Kennedy carrier group departed Edinburgh, Scotland and proceeded to a position just west of the Straits of Gibralter. The Kennedy group attempted to avoid Soviet surveillance by transiting west of the British Isles rather than through the English Channel and by turning off radars and radios that would identify the carrier.[516]

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[514] Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 510.

[515] Commander Sixth Fleet, "Command History 1973," p. VI-8; Galia Golan, "Soviet Decisionmaking," p. 203; Weinland, pp. 81-82; Roberts, pp. 193, 201.

[516] "Third US carrier is diverted suddenly," The Times (London), October 17, 1973, p. 8; J.P. Moorer, letter to author, April 18, 1988; Dixon, letter to author, April 18, 1988; Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 436; Weinland, p. 70.

The U.S. airlift to Israel commenced on October 13. On October 14 the Sixth Fleet was ordered to provide assistance for the airlift. In response, ships that been escorting the carriers were placed in a chain of picket stations stretching across the Mediterranean. The Sixth Fleet provided two forms of support for the airlift. First, the fleet provided navigation, surveillance, air defense, and standby search and rescue support for the U.S. Air Force C-5 and C-141 transports flying to Israel. Second, the Sixth Fleet carriers provided refueling services for F-4 and A-4 jets being ferried to Israel. The F-4s landed at the Azores to refuel and were refueled again in flight over the Mediterranean by Air Force KC-135 tankers. The A-4s landed at the Azores to refuel, were refueled a second time in flight by tankers from the <u>Kennedy</u>, then landed on <u>Roosevelt</u> in the central Mediterranean and remained overnight for refueling, servicing and pilot rest. The next day the A-4s were refueled in flight by tankers from the <u>Independence</u> during the final leg of their flight to Israel. Immediate delivery of the F-4s and A-4s would not have been possible without this Navy support because none of America's European allies would allow the U.S. jets to land in their countries (other than Portugal, which reluctantly allowed the U.S. to use the Azores).[517]

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[517] Commander Sixth Fleet, "Command History 1973," p. III-5; Morin, letter to author, April 14, 1988; J.P. Moorer,

The requirement to support the U.S. airlift to Israel created operational problems for the Sixth Fleet. The two carriers in the Mediterranean were forced to operate without some of their most valuable escorts at a time when they needed them to counter the Soviet anti-ship missile threat. Supporting the airlift left the Sixth fleet "widely dispersed and vulnerable."[518] This vulnerability was obvious to the Soviet navy. Robert Weinland contends that "as long as it remained dispersed, the Sixth Fleet was giving a clear--although unintentional--signal to all concerned that it was not about to undertake any offensive actions."[519] Sixth Fleet support for the airlift thus may have sent an inadvertent political signal to the Soviets.

On October 15 The Roosevelt began moving eastward to the central Mediterranean to support the U.S. airlift. A Soviet Petya-class corvette patrolling the Strait of Sicily began shadowing Roosevelt as it passed through the strait on October 16. It was replaced the next day by a Kashin-class destroyer, which remained with Roosevelt through October

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letter to author, April 18, 1988; Dixon, letter to author, April 18, 1988; Miller, "Storm-beaten Ships," pp. 20-22; Weinland, pp. 69-70. Defense of the U.S. transports was a serious consideration. In addition to the threat of Egyptian or Syrian attacks, there was a threat of Libyan attacks: on March 21, 1973, Libyan jets had fired on a U.S. Air Force C-130 eighty-three miles off the coast.

[518] Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 436.

[519] Weinland, p. 73.

22. Roosevelt arrived on station east of Malta on October 17 and remained there until October 25.[520]

On October 16 a Sverdlov-class cruiser and Kotlin-class destroyer joined the Kynda, Ugra, and Kashin trailing the Independence group and Little Rock south of Crete.[521] According to Vice Admiral Murphy, "The object of this presence may simply be to let us know that they are aware of our activities and to make us aware of theirs. They show no sign of being more alert than normally."[522] Admiral Zumwalt, on the other hand, felt the increased Soviet anti-carrier activities were "a specific reaction to the shifting of the fortunes of war in favor of Israel" made possible by the U.S. resupply airlift.[523] As it turned out, the Sverdlov and Kotlin replaced the Kynda and Kashin trailing Independence. Although considered to be an anti-carrier group, the replacement Soviet ships were much less of a threat to the U.S. carrier than the ships they replaced.[524]

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[520] Ibid, pp. 69, 83; Roberts, p. 198.

[521] Roberts, p. 196; Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 437.

[522] Quoted in Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 437.

[523] Ibid, pp. 437-38.

[524] Roberts speculates that this may have been "reciprocity" for the detachment of two of Independence's escorts to support the U.S. airlift to Israel. See Roberts, p. 196. In all likelihood, however, the rotation of ships on October 16 was not motivated by political or strategic concerns, but by logistics. Soviet Navy underway replenishment techniques were not well developed in 1973. The Soviets would have had great difficulty refueling and

Several changes in U.S. and Soviet naval dispositions in or related to the Mediterranean occurred from October 16 to October 21. USS Iwo Jima with 2,000 Marines embarked departed Moorehead, North Carolina, on October 16, for the Mediterranean, arriving October 25. Soviet Tu-95 Bear reconnaissance bombers periodically monitored Iwo Jima during her transit of the Atlantic.[525] A second Soviet resupply convoy, consisting of one LST and three LSMs, entered the Mediterranean on October 17 and proceeded to Syria.[526] The Kennedy group arrived west of Gibralter on October 18 and remained there through October 25. While west of Gibralter Kennedy remained a part of the Second Fleet, rather than joining the Sixth Fleet. A Soviet destroyer took up trail of the Kennedy group when it arrived west of Gibralter on October 18 and remained with the carrier for the next two days. It was not replaced it departed, probably because Kennedy remained in the Atlantic rather than entering the Mediterranean. From October 18 to

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resupplying their ships while they trailed the fast U.S. carrier groups. Instead, they had to periodically relieve their ships so that they could be refueled at one of the anchorages where the Soviets kept their replenishment ships (the Kynda and Sverdlov rotated at precise seven-day intervals, switching again on October 24).

[525] "2,000 Marines to Go to Bolster Sixth Fleet," New York Times, October 16, 1973, p. 16; Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 443; Roberts, p. 198.

[526] Galia Golan, Yom Kippur and After, p. 108; Weinland, p. 82; Watson, p. 108; Roberts, p. 201.

24, Kennedy provided support for the U.S. airlift, refueling jet fighters being ferried to Israel.[527] A Mod Kildin-class destroyer armed with SS-N-2 anti-ship cruise missiles and a Kashin-class DDG entered the Mediterranean from the Black Sea on October 19, further reinforcing the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron. On October 20 a Soviet Kashin joined the Kotlin and Kashin already off Syria (for a total of 3 DDGs), increasing the defenses for Soviet ships and aircraft resupplying Syria. The three Soviet DDGs remained on station until the ceasefire went into effect, departing between October 24 and 26.[528]

The Mediterranean was relatively quiet on October 22 and 23. After passage of the U.N. ceasefire resolution on October 22, the Sixth Fleet was directed to begin planning to return to normal peacetime operations. Through October 24 Vice Admiral Murphy expected that the Sixth Fleet would return to normal operations in the near future.[529] The only noteworthy U.S. naval operation took place on October 22, when fighters from Independence escorted Kissinger's plane into and out of Israel.[530] The Soviet Mediterranean

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[527] J.P. Moorer, letter to author, April 18, 1988; Dixon, letter to author, April 18, 1988; Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 436; Weinland, p. 70.

[528] Roberts, pp. 194, 201.

[529] Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 439.

[530] Ibid; Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, pp. 559-60.

Squadron's operations remained essentially unchanged. Surveillance of Mediterranean chokepoints and trailing of Independence and Roosevelt continued. The Kashin-class DDG trailing Roosevelt was replaced by a Petya-class frigate on October 22 in a routine rotation. Most of the Soviet combatants were concentrated in the vicinity of Crete, with a smaller concentration off Syria. Soviet ships armed with anti-ship missiles remained within range of the Independence task group south of Crete. Soviet Tu-16 Badgers continued flying surveillance missions over the Mediterranean, but did not harass the Sixth Fleet.[531]

On October 22 a Soviet merchant ship passed through the Bosporous emitting radiation, which was detected by Western sensors. The White House received a report on this event on October 25, well after the decision to set DEFCON 3. Detection of radiation created suspicions that the Soviets had sent nuclear warheads to Egypt for the Soviet-manned SCUD tactical rockets delivered to Egypt before the war--perhaps as a political signal to the United States of the Soviet commitment to enforce the ceasefire. However, the evidence for this was sketchy and U.S. officials later expressed doubts that the Soviets had deployed nuclear warheads in Egypt.[532] Some observers have speculated that

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[531] Glassman, p. 162; Weinland, p. 83.

[532] Quandt, Soviet Policy, pp. 30-31; Quandt, Decade of Decisions, p. 198; Galia Golan, "Soviet Decisionmaking," p.

the nuclear material was destined for the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron.[533] Although mysterious, this event did not have a significant impact on the course of the crisis.

The Soviet Mediterranean Squadron numbered 80 vessels as of 24 October, including 31 surface combatants (two armed with anti-ship cruise missiles) and 16 submarines (four or five armed with anti-ship cruise missiles). The surface combatants included three cruisers, twelve destroyers, about nine frigates and corvettes, three amphibious ships, and two minesweepers. At least five of the Soviet conventional attack submarines were in the eastern Mediterranean on October 24. Additionally, five more Soviet submarines were known to be en route to the Mediterranean. The ships and

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209; Galia Golan, Yom Kippur and After, p. 123; Insight Team, p. 411; Kalb and Kalb, p. 557; Aronson, pp. 192-93; Weinland, p. 85; Dowty, pp. 258-59; Rubinstein, p. 276; Glassman, p. 163; "Officials Suspect Russians Sent Atom Arms to Egypt," New York Times, November 22, 1973, p. 1.

[533] Weinland, p. 85; Galia Golan, "Soviet Decision-making," p. 209. That the Soviet ship carried warheads for the fleet is possible, but unlikely. At the time, the Soviet nuclear-capable units in the Mediterranean consisted of two Kynda-class cruisers and four or five guided missile submarines. The submarines could not change the warheads on their missiles, which were mounted outside the pressure hull. The Kyndas had internal magazines, but probably could not rebuild missiles with nuclear warheads. The submarines and Kyndas would have had to tie up alongside a pier or tender to reload entire missiles. It is possible that Soviet tenders in the Mediterranean had the capability to reload the submarines and cruisers, and may even have been able to rebuild missiles with nuclear warheads (a complex task). The Soviet ship that had emitted the radiation proceeded to Alexandria, where several Soviet naval auxiliaries were located, but there is no evidence that the warheads were transferred to the tenders.

submarines armed with anti-ship cruise missiles could launch a total of forty missiles in their first salvo (up from about 20 on October 6). This was a formidable threat to the Sixth Fleet carriers.[534] The Soviet Mediterranean Squadron began moving into position on October 24 to support the possibility of Soviet military intervention on behalf of Egypt. According to Robert Weinland, "The Soviets apparently anticipated strong U.S. opposition to what they felt they might have to do--intervene directly in the conflict to protect Egypt--and they moved quickly as possible to be in an advantageous position to deal with that opposition."[535] The Soviets would take two naval actions over the next two days: increasing its coverage of the U.S. carrier and amphibious groups, and deploying an amphibious and combatant force off Egypt.

The Sverdlov and Kotlin trailing Independence were joined by an anti-carrier group composed of a Kynda-class cruiser, Kashin-class DDG, and Kotlin-class destroyer on October 24.[536] Although this rotation was probably due

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[534] Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 439, 447; Watson, p. 106; Roberts, p. 194; Glassman, pp. 161-62.

[535] Weinland, p. 83. Also see Glassman, pp. 162-63.

[536] Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 447; Roberts, p. 203. Galia Golan states that a Moskva-class helicopter cruiser, rather than a Kynda-class cruiser joined Independence on October 24. Rubinstein states that both of the Soviet Moskva-class helicopter cruisers were in the Mediterranean during the crisis. See Galia Golan, "Soviet Decisionmaking," p. 209; Rubinstein, p. 272. Golan and Rubinstein are wrong: both of

primarily to logistic factors, it would also have served to protect the Soviet airlift if the Soviet Union had intervened militarily in Egypt. Independence was sitting astride Soviet air routes to Egypt, and the Soviets had every reason to expect that the Sixth Fleet would attempt to counter Soviet military intervention. The Soviet Kynda, carrying anti-ship cruise missiles with a range of about 250 nautical miles, did not need to trail the carrier in order to target it. Placing the Kynda group close to Independence sent a clear warning that the Sixth Fleet would not be permitted to interfere in Soviet military operations.[537]

Five Soviet ships--a Kashin, a Kotlin, an LST, and two LSMs--were deployed off the coast of Egypt on October 24. This force, and a group of combatants that joined it the next day, probably had four missions: first, to support the airlift to Egypt if the Soviets decided to intervene in Egypt; second, to deter and defend against Israeli attacks on Egyptian ports and airfields that would be used for the Soviet airlift and sealift; third to evacuate remaining Soviet noncombatant personnel if the Israelis continued advancing into Egypt; and, fourth, to land embarked naval

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the Soviet Moskva-class helicopter carriers remained in the Black Sea during the crisis. See Weinland, p. 78; Watson, pp. 106, 111; Roberts, p. 195.

[537] Weinland, p. 83; Watson, p. 114; Roberts, p. 203; Galia Golan, "Soviet Decisionmaking," pp. 209-10; Miller, "Storm-beaten Ships," p. 24.

infantry in Egypt in conjunction with the landing of airborne troops. The Soviet amphibious ships could carry a maximum of about 1,800 troops, and probably carried much less than that--a force inadequate to seriously threaten Israel or effectively defend Egypt without the Soviet airborne divisions that had been placed on alert.[538] The likely objective for Soviet naval infantry would have been to prevent Israel from seizing Port Said--important for logistical support of Soviet troops in Egypt.

When DEFCON 3 was set, the Sixth Fleet was allowed to carry out the measures that Vice Admiral Murphy had been requesting since early in the crisis to improve the fleet's readiness for action. Kissinger makes it clear, however, that Sixth Fleet movements were being used to send a political signal to the Soviet Union, one the Soviets would detect long before they detected the U.S. alert.[539] At 1:25 A.M. on October 25, the JCS ordered the Roosevelt carrier group to proceed at best speed to the eastern Mediterranean and ordered the Kennedy carrier group, still west of

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[538] Weinland, pp. 84-85, 88; Quandt, p. 198; Roberts, p. 204; Galia Golan, Yom Kippur and After, pp. 109, 122-23; Galia Golan, "Soviet Decisionmaking," p. 209; Glassman, pp. 162-63. Press reports, quoting U.S. officials, put the number of Soviet naval infantry in the Mediterranean as high as 6,000 troops. See "Kissinger Says Action is Expression of Policy," New York Times, October 26, 1973, p. 20. That number is undoubtedly high: the Soviet amphibious ships in the Mediterranean could not carry that many troops.

[539] Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, pp. 589. Also see Weinland, p. 90.

Gibralter, to join Independence and Roosevelt in the eastern Mediterranean at best speed. The three attack carriers were concentrating astride Soviet sealanes and airlanes to Egypt, in position to forcibly prevent the Soviet Union from intervening militarily in the conflict. An hour later the JCS suspended the heavy Navy support for the airlift to Israel and allowed all but two of the escorts to return to the Independence and Roosevelt groups. This left USS Harry E. Yarnell (DLG 17) in the western Mediterranean and USS Belknap (DLG 31) in the eastern Mediterranean as picket ships for the airlift. At 3:00 P.M. on October 25, the JCS ordered four U.S. Navy destroyers in the Baltic (previously detached from the Kennedy group) to proceed to the Mediterranean to reinforce the Sixth Fleet. Meanwhile, the helicopter carrier Iwo Jima and its embarked Marines entered the Mediterranean, for a total of over 5,000 Marines assigned to the Sixth Fleet. The ships of the Sixth Fleet were already operating at Condition III, a heightened condition of readiness in which the ships were prepared to immediately defend against enemy attacks (an internal Navy readiness system separate from the DEFCON system).[540]

Secretary of Defense Schlesinger stated in a news conference on the day after the alert was declared that the

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[540] Commander Sixth Fleet, "Command History 1973," pp. III-5, III-6; Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 443, 447; Miller, "Storm-beaten Ships," pp. 23-24; Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 589; Weinland, pp. 70-71, 74; Roberts, p. 204.

Soviet naval buildup in the Mediterranean had been a factor in the U.S. decision to set DEFCON 3: "The Soviet buildup of naval forces in the Mediterranean, associated with the possibility of actions taking place than might have involved U.S. naval forces, leads one to take precautionary steps involved in putting all U.S. forces that could be involved in a higher state of readiness."[541] On October 25 three Soviet combatants--a Sverdlov, a Mod-Kildin class destroyer (armed with SS-N-2 anti-ship cruise missiles), and a Kotlin-class DDG--joined other Soviet ships trailing the Independence group. Late on October 25 these three ships and two other Kashin-class DDGs proceeded toward Egypt, joining the five-ship amphibious group already there on October 26. The Sverdlov and its two escorts soon departed, and on October 27 intercepted the U.S. amphibious group south of Crete.[542] As additional Sixth Fleet task groups rendezvoused in the operating area south of Crete over the next few days, each U.S. task group was covered by a separate group of Soviet surface combatants, composed of ships armed with anti-ship missiles escorted by additional ships armed with AAW missiles.[543]

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[541] Schlesinger, "News Conference of October 26," p. 620.

[542] Weinland, p. 84; Roberts, p. 204; Rubinstein, p. 281.

[543] Commander Sixth Fleet, "Command History 1973," p. VI-8; Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 447; Roberts, p. 206.

The Soviet navy commenced intensive anti-carrier exercises against the Independence group on October 26. Soviet submarines armed with anti-ship cruise missiles participated in the exercise, which continued through November 3.[544] A Sverdlov-class cruiser and a Kashin-class DDG began shadowing the Roosevelt group on October 26, and soon joined the anti-carrier exercise. The Soviet anti-carrier exercise was probably intended as a signal that the Soviet navy was prepared to counter the Sixth Fleet in the eastern Mediterranean. As Charles Petersen notes,

> the Soviets routinely carry out anticarrier exercises in full view of U.S. Navy observers--often using U.S. carriers themselves as simulated targets. Through this exercise activity, the Soviet Navy has made the U.S. aware of some of the tactics its ACW [anti-carrier warfare] forces might be expected to employ. In effect, therefore, the Soviets have transmitted to the U.S. an "action language" vocabulary that can be--and has been--employed for signaling during crises.[545]

This is exactly what took place in the October 1973 crisis.

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[544] Schlesinger, "News Conference of October 26," p. 621; Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 447; Weinland, p. 74; Roberts, pp. 195, 204, 206. It is not clear how quickly the Navy discerned that the Soviet anti-carrier activities were an exercise rather than an actual attack. The navy could well have had warning of the exercise from intelligence sources, although there is no evidence of this. Since Sixth Fleet ships and planes were closely monitoring all the major Soviet warships, final preparations for missile launch--such as fire control radar lock-on and opening of missile tube doors--or actual missile launches would have been detected immediately. Lack of such indicators of an actual attack may well have been the first, and only, evidence that the Soviets were conducting an exercise.

[545] Charles C. Petersen, "Showing the Flag," in Bradford Dismukes and James McConnell, eds., Soviet Naval Diplomacy (New York: Pergamon Press, 1979), p. 105.

Stephen Roberts described the anti-carrier exercise as "the most intense signal the Soviets had ever transmitted with their naval forces in a crisis."[546] The signal was received loud and clear by the Sixth Fleet.

The U.S. carriers, denied freedom to maneuver by White House orders placing them in small, fixed operating areas, were extremely vulnerable to a Soviet preemptive strike.[547] Soviet ships and submarines armed with anti-ship cruise missiles were constantly within range of the U.S. carriers while they were in the eastern Mediterranean.[548] Vice Admiral Murphy, Commander of the Sixth Fleet, has described the climate in the Mediterranean during the Soviet anti-carrier exercise:

> The U.S. Sixth Fleet and the Soviet Mediterranean Fleet were, in effect, sitting in a pond in close proximity and the stage for the hitherto unlikely "war at sea" scenario was set. This situation prevailed for several days. Both fleets were obviously in a high readiness posture for whatever might come next, although it appeared that neither fleet knew exactly what to expect.[549]

Admiral Zumwalt has described the period of the soviet anti-carrier exercise in strong terms: "I doubt that major units of the U.S. Navy were ever in a tenser situation since World

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[546] Roberts, p. 210.

[547] Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 436; Weinland, p. 74.

[548] Morin, letter to author, April 14, 1988; Dixon, letter to author, April 18, 1988; Glassman, p. 162.

[549] Quoted in Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 447.

War II ended than the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean was for the week after the alert was declared."[550] This tense situation lasted through October 30, well after the cease-fire took hold and tensions in the Middle East had eased.

On October 27 a Sverdlov-class cruiser, Mod-Kildin class destroyer (armed with SS-N-2 anti-ship cruise missiles), and Kotlin-class DDG began trailing the U.S. amphibious group. The three Soviet combatants represented a formidable threat to the lightly armed U.S. amphibious ships. As Soviet combatants rendezvoused with the U.S. task groups, they joined the war at sea exercises that started on October 26. A Soviet Kresta II-class ASW cruiser entered the Mediterranean from the Atlantic on October 27--the only Soviet surface combatant to do so during the crisis. This Kresta II remained in the western Mediterranean, well clear of the action to the east. Three Soviet combatants entered the Mediterranean from the Black Sea on October 29: a Kynda-class cruiser armed with anti-ship cruise missiles, a Kashin-class DDG, and and a Kotlin-class DDG.[551]

On October 30 the JCS authorized the three U.S. attack carriers to move to the west and maneuver freely in order to counter intense Soviet anti-carrier activities. As Robert Weinland notes, "This gave the Soviets yet another clear--

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[550] Ibid, p. 446.

[551] Ibid; Roberts, pp. 195, 204, 206.

and unintentional, but in the end not unwelcome--signal: the United States was relaxing."[552] The three carriers remained southwest of Crete through November 13. The Soviet anti-carrier group that had entered the Mediterranean on October 29 began trailing the Kennedy carrier group on October 31 and joined in the anti-carrier exercise. The Soviet navy now had an anti-carrier group trailing each of the three U.S. carrier task groups, and additional combatants trailing the U.S. amphibious group. Also on October 31 two Nanuchka-class corvettes armed with anti-ship cruise missiles and a Skoryy-class destroyer entered the Mediterranean from the Black Sea.[553] The Nanuchkas further increased the Soviet squadron's anti-ship missile strength. As of October 31 there were 95 Soviet naval vessels in the Mediterranean, including 40 surface combatants (five armed with anti-ship cruise missiles), 23 submarines (about seven armed with anti-ship cruise missiles), four AGIs, and 28 auxiliaries. The 40 Soviet surface combatants consisted of five cruisers, fifteen destroyers, six frigates and corvettes, two guided missile corvettes, eight amphibious ships, and four mine-sweepers. The ships and submarines armed with anti-ship cruise missiles could launch a total of 88 missiles in their first salvo (up from about twenty on October 6 and forty on

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[552] Weinland, p. 75.

[553] Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 447; Weinland, pp. 71, 86; Roberts, pp. 194, 206.

October 24). The Sixth Fleet numbered about 60 ships, including three attack carriers, two amphibious assault helicopter carriers, and nine attack submarines (SSNs).[554]

U.S. and Soviet naval operations began to return to normal upon completion of the Soviet war at sea exercise against the Sixth Fleet. On November 3 Independence and her escorts were ordered to Athens for a port visit and the amphibious group was ordered to proceed to Souda Bay and anchor. Also on November 3, Soviet surveillance of the Sixth Fleet began to decline and Soviet combatants ceased trailing Roosevelt and the U.S. amphibious groups. Over the next few days Soviet combatants ceased trailing other U.S. Navy units as they left the eastern Mediterranean. The Soviet Mediterranean Squadron began reducing its strength to peacetime levels on November 7 when three combatants entered the Black Sea. The three U.S. carriers interrupted their cycle of port visits and remained at sea November 9-14 while Kissinger was in the Middle East conducting negotiations. This was the final U.S. naval activity in the Mediterranean related to the crisis. On November 18 the Sixth Fleet was

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[554] Commander Sixth Fleet, "Command History 1973," pp. III-6, III-10, VI-8; "U.S. Carrier Force Is Sent Toward the Indian Ocean," New York Times, October 30, 1973, p. 1; Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 447; Weinland, pp. 77, 85; Watson, p. 111; Roberts, pp. 194, 206. The Soviet first salvo total of 88 anti-ship missiles included eight SS-N-14s carried by the Kresta II-class cruiser, but since 1973 that missile has been determined to be an ASW weapon. The actual Soviet first salvo total was thus 80 anti-ship cruise missiles--a formidable threat to the Sixth Fleet.

directed to stand down from alert and the Kennedy carrier group, which was now a month overdue returning from deployment, was ordered to proceed home to Norfolk. As of November 19 the number of Soviet ships in the Mediterranean had declined from 95 to 70 and Soviet naval operations had essentially returned to normal.[555]

The U.S. and Soviet navies also increased their forces in the Indian Ocean immediately after the crisis. During the crisis, the U.S. Middle East Force consisted of a flagship (a converted dock landing ship) and two destroyers. The Soviet Indian Ocean Squadron consisted of about twenty ships, including a destroyer, a Foxtrot-class attack submarine, two corvettes, two minesweepers, an LST, and various auxiliaries. The CNO had recommended on October 25, the day DEFCON 3 was set, that an attack carrier task group be moved into the Indian Ocean from the Pacific. On October 29, as part of U.S. actions to increase its readiness for military operations in the Middle East, the attack carrier USS John Hancock (CVA 19), with five escorts and an oiler, were ordered into the Indian Ocean. The carrier's destination was stated to be the Persian Gulf area and the deployment was originally described as a response to the Soviet buildup in the Mediterranean (This was later retracted and

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[555] Commander Sixth Fleet, "Command History 1973," p. VI-8; "Sixth Fleet's Alert Ends; Some Vessels Due Home," New York Times, November 20, 1973, p. 4; Zumwalt, On Watch, pp. 447-48; Weinland, pp. 71, 85-86; Roberts, pp. 194, 206.

the deployment described as a routine show-the-flag cruise). At the time, there was no unusual Soviet naval activity in the Indian Ocean. On November 12 a Sverdlov-class cruiser (the one commonly used as the Pacific Fleet flagship) and a Kashin-class DDG transited the Straits of Malacca, but remained in the eastern Indian Ocean rather than joining Hancock in the Arabian Sea. U.S. and Soviet naval activity in the Indian Ocean remained at unusually high levels for several months, for reasons largely unrelated to the situation in the Middle East.[556]

In summary, both the United States and the Soviet Union used their navies for political signaling in the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. Tactical-level interactions between U.S. and Soviet naval forces in the Mediterranean were intense during the crisis: Soviet tattletales and aircraft closely monitored the Sixth Fleet, and U.S. ships and aircraft closely monitored the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron. Soviet ships and submarines armed with anti-ship cruise missiles were constantly within range of U.S. the carriers while they were in the eastern Mediterranean. The Sixth Fleet took

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[556] Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 446; "U.S. Carrier Force Is Sent Toward the Indian Ocean," New York Times, October 30, 1973, p. 1; Roberts, p. 207. The increased U.S. presence in the Indian Ocean was related to the Middle East crisis only in the sense that the carrier task group was available in the event that Arab nations attempted to close the sea lanes out of the Persian Gulf by force. However, there apparently was not much concern on the part of U.S. leaders that the Arab nations would attempt to do this.

actions to counter the threat from Soviet tattletales and anti-carrier forces, seeking the ability to instantly destroy all threatening Soviet units upon indication of a Soviet attack. Tensions at sea were acute during the October 26-31 period due to intense Soviet anti-carrier exercises against the Sixth Fleet.

The 1973 Arab-Israeli War marked several records and new developments in Soviet naval operations. The Soviet Mediterranean Squadron conducted operations on a much larger scale than it had in the 1967 and 1970 Middle East crises, and maintained those operations for a much longer period of time, making it, in Bruce Watson's words, "the most ambitious use of the Soviet Navy for political purposes up to that time."[557] Additionally, for the first time the Soviet navy conducted crisis-related operations that did not involve countering the U.S. Navy--such as the sealifts to Syria and Egypt and defense of those sealifts--while at the same time conducting significant operations directed against the U.S. Sixth Fleet. The Soviet Mediterranean Squadron was responsive to changes in Sixth Fleet operations, redeploying ships as necessary to counter the U.S. fleet, and did not have to suspend its pro-Arab operations to do so.[558] This demonstrated a depth and flexibility that had not been seen

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[557] Watson, p. 103. Also see Roberts, p. 210; Rubinstein, p. 272.

[558] Weinland, p. 86; Roberts, p. 210.

in previous crises. The implications of this are well described by Bradford Dismukes:

> On the basis of the information now available, it appears that the Soviets were prepared to accept significantly higher risks in this crisis than before. They committed naval forces that, in the situation, appeared to be quite formidable, and they behaved at the peak of the crisis (with the threat to intervene unilaterally on Egypt's behalf) as though they considered the Sixth Fleet effectively neutralized.[559]

The Soviet Navy can thus be viewed as having become a full-fledged superpower navy in 1973.

Several specific aspects of Soviet naval operations were also noteworthy. First, the Soviet Navy conducted extensive and sustained operations within a combat zone for the first time. In previous crises, Soviet ships had withdrawn from war zones, entering only as necessary to monitor the fighting ashore and to keep tabs on the Sixth Fleet.[560] Second, it was the first time that the Soviet Navy provided warships to protect a Soviet airlift and sealift during a crisis.[561] Third, it was the first time that Soviet amphibious ships were deployed to the Mediterranean in significant numbers in a crisis, and the first time that they were used for sealift during a crisis.[562]

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[559] Dismukes, p. 503

[560] Weinland, p. 87.

[561] Ibid, p. 82.

[562] Ibid; Dismukes, p. 503.; Rubinstein, p. 272.

Fourth, it was the first time that the Soviets deployed warships to counter the U.S. amphibious group as well as U.S. carrier groups--a move that made it clear the Soviets were countering the U.S. ability to intervene in the Middle East.[563] All of these actions marked a new Soviet willingness to fully exploit the capabilities of its navy in support of crisis foreign policy objectives.

The October 1973 crisis was the first Soviet-American confrontation in which the Soviet Navy posed a significant immediate threat to the U.S. Navy. In the assessment of Bradford Dismukes, "Soviet actions in the October War may well have produced a situation in which the Soviets were tactically superior."[564] This assessment was shared by senior Navy officers. Early on October 25, Schlesinger and Admiral Moorer briefed the Joint Chiefs on the events leading up to the worldwide DEFCON 3 alert. According to Admiral Zumwalt, Admiral Moorer had stated during the WSAG meeting that "we would lose our ass in the eastern Med [Mediterranean] under these circumstances." Admiral Zumwalt told Schlesinger that the eastern Mediterranean was the worst place for the U.S. Navy to fight the Soviets.[565]

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[563] Ibid, p. 86; Roberts, p. 206.

[564] Dismukes, p. 502. Also see Aronson, p. 195; Dowty, pp. 275-76; Harvey Sicherman, "The Yom Kippur War: End of Illusion?," Foreign Policy Papers, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1976), p. 53.

[565] Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 446.

Admiral Moorer's opinion was not quite so negative looking back on the crisis in retrospect: "Victory in the Mediterranean encounter in 1973 would have depended on which navy struck first and a variety of other factors. Victory would have depended on the type of scenario which occurred."[566] This still indicates, however, that the Soviet Navy posed a severe threat to the Sixth Fleet. Bruce Watson has summarized the impact of that threat:

> Thus, for the first time in the post-World War II era, the U.S. Navy had been effectively denied complete control of the seas. Throughout the entire period from 1957 through 1980, the Soviet Navy never posed a greater threat against U.S. naval forces operating on the high seas, nor was the [Soviet] navy's effect ever more relevant in the U.S.-Soviet nonstrategic balance of power.[567]

The final noteworthy point about Soviet naval operations in the October 1973 crisis is that the Soviets did not deploy as many ships to the Mediterranean as they could have sent. At the height of the Soviet buildup, only 20 of the 42 cruisers and destroyers in the Black Sea Fleet had been sent to the Mediterranean. Nor did the Soviets deploy any of the modern ASW ships (Kara-class ASW cruisers and Moskva-class ASW helicopter cruisers) that were available in the Black Sea Fleet.[568] Several possible reasons for this have been proposed by Western naval

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[566] Quoted in Watson, p. 107.

[567] Ibid, p. 116.

[568] Weinland, p. 78; Roberts, p. 195; Dismukes, p. 503.

analysts. Stephen Roberts and Robert Weinland suggest that the Soviets only deployed older, less capable, and therefore more expendable ships to the Mediterranean.[569] Bradford Dismukes concludes, based on this pattern, that the Soviets were maintaining "a strategic reserve to deal with unforeseeable contingencies."[570] Stephen Roberts, on the other hand, contends that the Black Sea Fleet was approaching the limits of its resources and that the Soviets might have been forced to deploy ships from the Baltic or Northern Fleets to further reinforce the Mediterranean Squadron.[571]

All of these interpretations are probably reading too much into the available information. The Soviets sent most of their ships armed with anti-ship missiles to the Mediterranean (five of eight, including both Kynda-class cruisers), probably because their primary concern was U.S. intervention in the Middle East with carrier and amphibious forces (that concern is evident in Soviet naval operations during the crisis, described earlier). No modern ASW ships were sent because the primary threat was U.S. surface ships, not U.S. submarines. The Soviets appeared to send their older ships to the Mediterranean simply because the ships

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[569] Roberts, p. 195; Weinland, p. 78.

[570] Dismukes, p. 503.

[571] Roberts, p. 195.

armed with anti-ship missiles had been built earlier than the ASW ships (1959-1966 for the Kynda and Kresta I anti-ship missile-armed cruisers, versus 1966-1976 for the Kresta II and Kara ASW cruisers). Additionally, the Soviets sent two relatively new Nanuchka-class corvettes armed with anti-ship missiles to the Mediterranean. The Black Sea Fleet was hardly at the limit of its resources with less than half of its major surface combatants deployed (The number of replenishment ships available to support the ships already deployed was probably a greater constraint than the number of combatants left to deploy). On the other hand, the Soviets probably did not keep 22 major surface combatants in the Black Sea as a strategic reserve: they could easily be bottled up if the U.S. closed the Turkish Straits. The overall pattern of Soviet naval deployments in October 1973 was simple: they sent the ships they needed to counter U.S. surface forces to the Mediterranean, and left those they did not need in the Black Sea. The one possible implication of this pattern is that the Soviets probably did not expect the crisis to escalate to war with the United States. Had they expected war, they probably would have surged every available ship and submarine into the Mediterranean.

The final step in this review of U.S. naval operations during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War is to examine the tactical-level interactions that could have occurred with Soviet or Arab forces and the interactions that did occur with those forces. The following interactions conceivably could have occurred during the the crisis: collisions at sea between U.S. and Soviet vessels, collisions between U.S. and Soviet aircraft, U.S. ships or aircraft firing on Soviet or Arab planes approaching the fleet in a potentially hostile manner, U.S. ships or aircraft firing on Egyptian ships or submarines approaching the fleet in a potentially hostile manner,[572] Soviet naval vessels firing on U.S. planes approaching them in a potentially hostile manner, Arab or Israeli aircraft firing on U.S. planes carrying supplies to Israel, U.S. fighters being flown to Israel, or U.S. planes flying reconnaissance missions off their coasts. A remote possibility was that Soviet Mig-25s in Egypt might try to intercept U.S. SR-71 reconnaissance planes flying over the Suez canal.

Despite the intense tactical-level interaction between U.S. and Soviet Naval forces, there were no collisions at sea or other dangerous incidents. Unlike 1967, there were no instances of Soviet close quarters maneuvering to harass the Sixth Fleet. Soviet Tu-16 Badger reconnaissance bombers were active over the Mediterranean, but did not harass the Sixth Fleet. There were minor incidents, such as training

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[572] The Egyptian navy established a distant blockade of Israel south and southwest of Crete with destroyers (beyond the range of Israeli missile boats) and southeast of Crete with submarines. See Dupuy, pp. 557-58, 562; Herzog, pp. 263-64.

guns and missile launchers on U.S. ships, firing flares at U.S. planes, and shining searchlights on U.S. ships at night, all of which violate the Incidents at Sea Agreement. Other than this, however, both sides complied with the provisions of the Incidents at Sea Agreement: the U.S. carrier groups used the maneuvering signals called for in the Agreement and Soviet ships avoided interfering with the U.S. formations.[573] No Egyptian or Syrian vessels or aircraft were encountered during the crisis because the sixth Fleet was kept well clear of their coasts.[574] On October 25 two high speed surface contacts headed out into the Mediterranean raised concern that they might be headed

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[573] Engen, letter to author, April 25, 1988; J.P. Moorer, letter to author, April 18, 1988; Morin, letter to author, April 14, 1988; Dixon, letter to author, April 18, 1988; Glassman, p. 162; Roberts, p. 196. There was one minor incident between U.S. and Soviet forces outside the Mediterranean about the time war broke out in the Middle East. While Kennedy was participating in a NATO exercise in the Norwegian Sea, there was a minor mid-air collision between a Soviet Tu-16 "Badger" reconnaissance bomber and a U.S. F-4 Phantom jet fighter from Kennedy that had been sent up to intercept and trail the Soviet plane. There was "slight" damage to each, but both landed safely. J.P. Moorer, letter to author, April 18, 1988. The Soviet Union apparently did not file a diplomatic protest over the incident, though it probably filed a complaint through Incidents at Sea Agreement channels.

[574] Engen, letter to author, April 25, 1988; Morin, letter to author, April 14, 1988; Dixon, letter to author, April 18, 1988. Weinland states that the Sixth Fleet "was not challenged directly by any of the belligerents." Weinland, p. 71. The fact that no Egyptian vessels were encountered by the U.S. Navy during the crisis suggests that the Egyptian destroyers were not aggressively enforcing the blockade of Israel and may have spent considerable time in Libyan or Algerian ports--far from danger.

for the Independence carrier group, but the identity of the contacts was established as Israeli well before there was any need to take action against them.[575] There were very few accidents involving U.S. naval forces, and none serious enough to impair Washington's ability to manage the crisis.

Findings

This section will review the 1973 Arab-Israeli War to answer the eight research questions. The first question is to what degree were interactions between the forces of the two sides at the scene of the crisis the result of actions taken in accordance with mechanisms of delegated control, rather than direct control by national leaders? The Nixon Administration did not attempt to exercise direct control over the operations of the Sixth Fleet other than its movements in the Mediterranean. Sixth Fleet movements, however, were closely controlled--much closer than in the 1967 Middle East War. Rather than giving the fleet boundaries on where it was permitted to operate, as in 1967, Washington told the fleet exactly where to operate.[576] On the other hand, the President and Schlesinger did not attempt to communicate directly with any level in the chain

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[575] Roberts, p. 196.

[576] Zumwalt, interview by author, February 16, 1988; Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 436; Engen, letter to author, April 25, 1988.

of command below the JCS; orders to the Sixth Fleet were passed via normal channels. Nor did they made an effort to provide specialized guidance in mechanisms of delegated control. As a result, the ships of the Sixth Fleet acted in accordance with Navy standing orders in responding to Soviet naval operations. The measures taken by the Sixth Fleet to counter Soviet tattletales and anti-ship missile-armed ships were standard Navy tactics that had been used in the past (such as in the 1970 Jordanian crisis). There was thus significant delegation of authority to on-scene commanders and the guidance contained in Navy standing orders and standing rules of engagement played a crucial role in determining the nature of the tactical-level interactions that occurred.

The second question is were the forces of the two sides at the scene of the crisis tightly coupled with each other? Soviet tattletales and aircraft closely monitored the Sixth Fleet, and U.S. ships and aircraft closely monitored the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron. The Soviets quickly responded to changes in Sixth Fleet operations, keeping every U.S. carrier in the eastern Mediterranean targeted with anti-ship missiles. Similarly, the Sixth Fleet quickly reacted to changes in Soviet naval operations, keeping Soviet ships that were an immediate threat to the carriers in the sights of U.S. ships or planes. Thus, Soviet and American forces were tightly coupled during the crisis--much more tightly than they had been in any previous Soviet-American crisis.

The third question is were the forces of the two sides being used by their national leaders as a political instrument in the crisis? It is clear that the United States used the Sixth Fleet for political signaling.[577] Admiral Zumwalt observes that as part of their political-military strategy, President Nixon and Kissinger "used the fleet for their 'shadow boxing' with the Soviet Union."[578] What Admiral Zumwalt viewed as "shadow boxing" was what Kissinger viewed as subtle political signaling. Vice Admiral Engen, a veteran of U.S. naval operations in both the 1967 and 1973 Middle East Wars, felt that the Sixth Fleet was used for political signalling more in 1973 than it had been in 1967: "There seemed to be more 'State Department' in this war and positioning of naval forces to convey signals."[579] That the Soviets received the signals being sent with the Sixth Fleet is indicated by the note the Soviets sent on October 12 protesting the movement of the U.S. fleet into the eastern Mediterranean.[580]

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[577] Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, pp. 475, 587-89; Weinland, pp. 71-73, 75, 90; Safran p. 494.

[578] Zumwalt, interview by author, February 16, 1988.

[579] Engen, letter to author, April 25, 1988.

[580] Kissinger, Years of Upheaval, p. 475.

The Soviet Union used its Mediterranean Squadron for political signaling, and it is clear from Kissinger's comments that U.S. leaders received the Soviet signals.[581] The Soviet naval actions that sent the strongest signals were reinforcement of the Mediterranean Squadron, which almost doubled in numbers of ships and quadrupled in firepower, trailing of Sixth Fleet task groups, keeping the bulk of the Squadron well clear of the fighting ashore, and conducting an anti-carrier exercise from October 26 to November 3. As will be discussed below, U.S. leaders also read political signals into Soviet naval actions that may not have been intended as signals--an example of inadvertent signaling.

The answers to these first three questions establish that the conditions necessary for stratified interaction existed in the 1973 Arab-Israeli War: The United States relied on methods of delegated control, U.S. and Soviet naval forces in the Mediterranean were tightly coupled, and both sides used their forces as political instruments under conditions of acute crisis. Significant and dangerous interactions occurred at the tactical level that were not directly controlled by American leaders. For example, President Nixon had no direct control over Sixth Fleet counter-targeting of Soviet ships carrying anti-ship cruise

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[581] Ibid, pp. 475, 509-10; Watson, p. 114; Roberts, pp. 196, 203, 210; Galia Golan, "Soviet Decisionmaking," pp. 202, 209-10; Weinland, p. 89.

missiles, and was probably unaware that this activity had inadvertently been set in motion by White House orders making the fleet an easy target for the Soviet Navy.

The fourth question is did crisis interactions at the tactical level become decoupled from the strategy being pursued by national leaders? To establish that stratified interactions became decoupled in the crisis requires two findings: first, that one or more of the potential causes of decoupling were present, and, second, that operational decisions made by tactical-level decisionmakers differed from those that political-level decisionmakers would have made in order to coordinate the actions with their strategy for managing the crisis. As for the first requirement, four of the potential causes of decoupling were present in the crisis: communications and information flow problems, impairment of political-level decisionmaking, a fast-paced tactical environment, and tactically inappropriate orders.

The U.S. communications system provided much faster communications in 1973 than it had in 1967, but still did not permit the President to exercise real-time direct control over the Sixth Fleet. This did not cause problems because the White House did not attempt to exercise such close control. There were thus no serious communications problems during the crisis.

Impairment of political-level decisionmaking was at least a minor factor in the crisis. President Nixon was in the midst of the Watergate scandal and the resignation of Vice President Spiro Agnew. Although President Nixon reportedly made key decisions himself and was kept informed of major developments in the crisis, he clearly did not exercise close, detailed control over U.S. actions in the crisis.[582] The President's political travails appear not to have had a direct impact on U.S. actions in the crisis, but undoubtedly complicated top-level decisionmaking.

The tactical environment in the Mediterranean was very fast-paced during the crisis. As has already been noted, there was intense tactical-level interaction between the U.S. and Soviet navies in the Mediterranean. The White House was not directly controlling the actions of the Sixth Fleet in that interaction, and available accounts of the crisis suggest that Nixon and Kissinger were unaware that it was occurring. Sixth Fleet efforts to counter the Soviet anti-ship missile threat required frequent tactical decisions as Soviet ships maneuvered to keep the U.S. carriers targeted. This intense maneuvering for tactical advantage was too fast-paced for the White House to be able to effectively control it. If a Soviet vessel had fired a missile at a U.S. carrier--accidently or deliberately--there

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[582] Kissinger, <u>Years of Upheaval</u>, p. 470; Quandt, <u>Decade of Decisions</u>, pp. 171, 183. In his memoirs, Nixon intersperses descriptions of the Middle East crisis with descriptions of the Watergate scandal, providing a good illustration of the impact that the scandal had on his attention. See Nixon, pp. 920-42.

would have been no time for on-scene commanders to consult with higher authority before taking action. The same situation could well have existed for the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron, which was constantly targeted at point blank rang by U.S. warships and attack aircraft.

Tactically inappropriate orders were a major factor in the crisis and led to decoupling. To ensure that the Sixth Fleet sent only the desired political signals, the White House ordered the fleet to remain in small, fixed operating areas. This made the U.S. fleet extremely vulnerable to a Soviet preemptive strike. The on-scene commanders--acting on their own initiative and well within their delegated authority--sought to reduce their vulnerability by counter-targeting the most threatening Soviet naval units. Tight direct control of Sixth Fleet movements by the White House thus generated tactically inappropriate orders.

The second requirement for establishing that decoupling occurred is that the operational decisions made by tactical-level decisionmakers differed from those that political-level decisionmakers would have made in order to coordinate those actions with their strategy for managing the crisis. As was discussed earlier, the Sixth Fleet was moved to south of Crete in order to demonstrate to the Soviet Union that the United States was prepared for any contingency, but had no aggressive intent and was not preparing to take an active part in the conflict. Sixth

Fleet movements on October 25 were intended to deter escalation of the conflcit--specfically, Soviet intervention in Egypt with airborne forces--but the fleet was restrained in order to avoid signalling excessive hostility or an intention to intervene directly in the conflict. Given these political signalling objectives, it is not clear that the White House would have viewed Sixth Fleet preparations for preemptive strikes against the Soviet navy--preparations the Soviets were well aware of--as supporting the U.S. strategy for managing the crisis or as sending the political signals it wanted sent to the Soviet Union. Thus, there appear to have been decoupled interactions in the crisis.

The fifth question is did national leaders and on-scene commanders hold different perceptions of the vulnerability of on-scene forces to preemption and the need to strike first in the event of an armed clash? During the first week of the crisis, U.S. Navy on-scene commanders were relatively unconcerned about the Soviet naval threat because the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron essentially continued normal peacetime operations. Vice Admiral Murphy, Commander of the Sixth Fleet, stated in a 1973 internal Navy report that he "did not perceive SOVMEDFLT [Soviet Mediterranean Fleet] a threat to successful completion of any of the perceived missions" during the October 6-13 period.[583] From

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[583] Quoted in Zumwalt, On Watch, p. 437.

October 14 onward, however, the tactical situation changed dramatically for the worse. U.S. Navy on-scene commanders in the Mediterranean were highly concerned about the threat of a Soviet preemptive attack due to the untenable tactical position in which the Sixth Fleet had peen placed by White House restrictions on the fleet's movements. When asked if he had been put in a position that he considered operationally undesirable or tactically vulnerable during the crisis, Rear Admiral Dixon, Commanding Officer of the Kennedy, replied yes, he had, because his carrier had been placed in "a fixed position in close proximity to the Soviets."[584] Soviet ships and submarines armed with anti-ship missiles were constantly within range of the U.S. carriers while they were in the eastern Mediterranean.[585] The threat of preemptive attack appeared to be particularly acute during the October 26-30 period due to intense Soviet anti-carrier exercises against the Sixth Fleet. Bruce Watson had explained why a Soviet anti-carrier exercise creates such grave concerns:

> One of the most difficult situations for Sixth Fleet forces to deal with is a Soviet anticarrier warfare exercise. When a U.S. ship is used as the simulated target, Soviet ships maneuver so realistically that it is virtually impossible to distinguish between exercise activity and a real attack on a carrier. In these exercises, Soviet

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[584] Dixon, letter to author, April 18, 1988.

[585] Morin, letter to author, April 14, 1988; Dixon, letter to author, April 18, 1988; Glassman, p. 162.

> forces are in position, and weapons are aimed at the target. All that is needed to transform the exercise into a shooting war is the order to fire. Just such an exercise was begun on October 26.[586]

The period of this Soviet exercise could well have been the closest that the Soviet Union and the United States have ever been to "hair trigger" readiness for war--at least at the tactical level.

Not surprisingly, senior U.S. Navy officers appear to have had a good grasp of the concerns felt by the on-scene commanders in the Mediterranean. In a statement to the press during the crisis, Admiral Bagley, CINCUSNAVEUR, described how the Sixth Fleet was being targeted by the Soviet navy.[587] Shlomo Aronson reports that senior naval officers at the Pentagon were very worried about military risks in the Mediterranean.[588] Admiral Moorer expressed concern about the Soviet naval threat in the eastern Mediterranean during the October 24-25 WSAG meeting, and Admiral Zumwalt expressed similar concerns to Schlesinger.[589] Thus, there does not appear to have been stratified threat perceptions within the military chain of command from the on-scene commander to the JCS Chairman.

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[586] Watson, p. 115-16.

[587] Quoted in Glassman, p. 162.

[588] Aronson, p. 195. Also see Dowty, pp. 275-76; Sicherman, p. 53.

[589] Zumwalt, <u>On Watch</u>, p. 446.

Civilian officials appear to have held threat perceptions much different from those held by U.S. Navy officers. Kissinger, in particular, did not perceive a threat from the Soviet Navy during the crisis. Kissinger's cavalier description of Soviet-American naval interaction during the crisis reveals his perception: "The two fleets, signaling parallel intentions, later met off Crete and started milling around there."[590] The "milling around" that Kissinger mentions was constant Soviet targeting of the U.S. carriers with anti-ship missiles and simultaneous U.S. counter-targeting of high-threat Soviet warships with ships and armed aircraft--a much more dangerous situation than that implied by Kissinger. Kissinger also was either unaware of the Soviet anti-carrier exercise or did not understand the threat it represented to the Sixth Fleet. Kissinger states in his memoirs that after October 25, when Soviet ships withdrew from the coast of Egypt, "No such threatening Soviet naval activity took place again."[591] In fact, the most threatening Soviet naval activity of the crisis--the anti-carrier exercise--commenced the next day.

After the crisis Kissinger would directly confront charges that the Soviet navy had been a serious threat to the Sixth Fleet: "I have seen statements that in 1973, the

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[590] Kissinger, <u>Years of Upheaval</u>, p. 475.

[591] Ibid, p. 599.

United States was affected in the conduct of the Middle East crisis by its fear of the Soviet navy. This may have been true of our navy; it wasn't true of our government. . . . We all suffered from the illusion that our navy was far superior to the Soviet navy, and we conducted ourselves accordingly."[592] Admiral Moorer and Admiral Zumwalt certainly did not share this view, so the persons mentioned by Kissinger probably included only himself, President Nixon, and perhaps Schlesinger. The important point is that this confirms a divergence of threat perceptions between civilian and military officials: the Navy chain of command from the JCS Chairman down to the carrier Commanding Officers perceived a serious threat from Soviet anti-carrier operations, while civilian officials did not perceive a threat to the Sixth Fleet. Thus, stratified threat perceptions did arise at the very top of the chain of command, between civilian and military officials.

Part of the reason why civilian officials held much different threat perceptions than those held by military officials is that the Navy chain of command was not kept informed of the political and diplomatic aspects of the crisis. When asked if the JCS was kept informed of U.S. objectives in the crisis and U.S. diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis, Admiral Zumwalt replied, "No. The JCS

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[592] Quoted in Richard Valeriani, Travels With Henry (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), pp. 181-82.

was only kept informed of those things on which Kissinger wanted our support, or which he thought we would find out anyway."[593] The Navy chain of command was also kept in the dark. When asked if the chain of command was kept informed of U.S. objectives in the crisis and U.S. diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis, Vice Admiral Engen, Deputy Commander in Chief U.S. Naval Forces Europe, replied, "There never is such information passed down the line."[594] Admiral Zumwalt confirms that Vice Admiral Murphy, Commander of the Sixth Fleet, also was not briefed on the political logic behind the tactically inappropriate orders being issued to his fleet: "And, worst of all from my point of view, he was not given the kind of explanation of these orders that a Vice Admiral and Fleet Commander, who afterall is not a blabbermouth or a dummy, is entitled to."[595] The on-scene commander thus lacked important information on the political context of the crisis, and had to interpret Soviet behavior on the basis of the military and naval moves being made by Soviet forces. It is not surprising, therefore, that Soviet naval operations in the Mediterranean appeared much more threatening to the Navy chain of command than they did to Kissinger.

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[593] Zumwalt, interview by author, February 16, 1988.

[594] Engen, letter to author, April 25, 1988.

[595] Zumwalt, <u>On Watch</u>, p. 436.

The only exception to this pattern was that Admiral Moorer informed the unified and specified commander in general terms of the purpose of the DEFCON 3 alert. In addition to contacting them verbally, Admiral Moorer sent them the following message at 3:37 A.M. on October 25:

> 1. Most recent communication with Soviets contains request that US join them in more forceful enforcement of Israel/Arab ceasefire by introduction of both US/Soviet forces. Soviets further state intentions to consider unilateral action if US declines.
>
> 2. Our reply not final at this point but, as you have noted, US response includes signal of elevation in force readiness, i.e., DEFCON Three world wide, alerting of 82nd Airborne, more eastward movement of carriers in Med [Mediterranean], and redeployment of SAC forces from Pacific.
>
> 3. I am in session with SECDEF and Chiefs and will keep you advised.[596]

This message and similar verbal communications were important for ensuring that key military commanders understood the purpose of the alert, which is described as a "signal" to the Soviets.

That the chain of command was not kept informed of political and diplomatic developments during the crisis was not unique to this particular crisis, the same phenomenon was observed in the 1958, 1962, and 1967 crises as well. Commander Seventh Fleet was as much in the dark on U.S. policy during the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis as Commander Sixth Fleet was in the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. Top-level

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[596] Joint Chiefs of Staff message, JCS 250737Z OCT 73, October 25, 1973 (declassified 1984).

civilian officials typically believe that political and diplomatic matters must be kept closely held in order to prevent premature disclosure of sensitive negotiations, which could seriously disrupt efforts to resolve a crisis. Although this is certainly a legitimate concern, it can create problems in coordinating military operations with political objectives if the military chain of command is totally excluded from being kept informed on political matters. Failure to provide the military chain of command with sufficient information to be able to understand the political context of a crisis is thus a major source of stratified threat perceptions.

The security dilemma can be stratified in a crisis; that is, decisionmakers at the political and tactical levels of interaction can hold much different threat perceptions. At the political level of interaction, neither the United States nor the Soviet Union had an incentive to launch a preemptive first strike against the other. Both sides desired to prevent the crisis from escalating to war. Military and naval moves, including the U.S. DEFCON 3 alert, were taken primarily for political purposes, rather than to achieve military advantages. At the tactical level of interaction, however, U.S. and Soviet naval forces had strong incentives to strike first and were actively targeting each other. U.S. Navy on-scene commanders were seriously concerned about the threat of a Soviet preemptive attack due to Soviet anti-carrier operations. Soviet Navy on-scene commanders must have shared similar concerns due to U.S. counter-targeting of their major combatants. The security dilemma was thus stratified--mild at the political level, but acute at the tactical level.

The sixth question is, when tactical-level interactions become decoupled, what factors inhibit escalation dynamics from occurring at the tactical level and being transmitted upward to the strategic and political levels of interaction? Although there were intense tactical-level interactions during the crisis, there were no cases of such interactions generating an escalation sequence. The most dangerous interactions occurred during the October 25-30 period, but did not escalate to violence. Although each side was constantly targeting the other and both sides were ready to instantly launch preemptive attacks, no weapons were fired during the crisis.

Three factors appear to have inhibited escalation during the crisis. First, neither the United States nor the Soviet Union wanted to intervene militarily in the war if they could possible avoid it, largely out of concern for an armed clash with the other superpower. Therefore they both acted cautiously with their military and naval forces, avoiding situations that could inadvertently involve them in the fighting and, with one exception, avoiding actions that were unnecessarily provocative.

The only exception to this pattern was the Soviet anti-carrier exercise that commenced on October 26--an action much different from Soviet behavior throughout the rest of the crisis. If that exercise had commenced late on October 24 or early on October 25, at the peak of superpower tensions, it might easily have been misperceived by the United States as a further indication of imminent Soviet military intervention in the Middle East. It would be tempting to speculate that the Soviets deliberately waited until after tensions had peaked in the Middle East before starting the exercise, but the available evidence argues against that interpretation. The timing of the exercise was driven by U.S. naval moves: The Soviets started the exercise in response to U.S. concentration of the Sixth Fleet in the eastern Mediterranean. The implication of this is that the Soviet anti-carrier exercise could well have started at any time in the crisis if the Sixth Fleet had been concentrated in the eastern Mediterranean. Therefore, while the overall pattern of Soviet military and naval behavior was one of restraint, the Soviets were willing to engage in certain highly provocative activities.

The second factor inhibiting escalation was that the United States and the Soviet Union communicated with each other frequently during the crisis. This helped to prevent the problem of ambiguous political signals, which can cause intentions and objectives to be misperceived. Soviet warnings to the United States on October 24 that it was prepared to intervene unilaterally in the Middle East if Israel did not respect the U.N. ceasefire were particularly important for avoiding a clash between the superpowers. Although that warning prompted the most intense superpower tensions of the crisis, including the U.S. worldwide DEFCON 3 alert, the situation probably would have been much worse if the United States and the Soviet Union had not been in direct communication at that point. The two superpowers probably would have had great difficulty interpreting the political significance of each other's military moves on October 24 and 25 had they not been able to express their interests and concerns to each other.

The third factor inhibiting escalation was caution and prudence on the part of U.S. Navy commanders in the Mediterranean. This was particularly important due to Soviet targeting of the Sixth Fleet with anti-ship missile platforms. On-scene commanders had to carefully balance the need to maintain a tactically viable situation against the danger of incidents with the Soviet Navy. This task was not made easier by White House orders prohibiting the carriers from maneuvering to evade Soviet targeting. Caution and prudence were particularly important for the U.S. ships and aircraft assigned to monitor high-threat Soviet ships and destroy them if they attempted to launch anti-ship missiles. When the Soviets commenced their anti-carrier exercise, U.S. ships and planes counter-targeting the Soviets had to distinguish between preparations for simulated and actual attacks--an exceedingly difficult task. A single misjudgement could have produced a Soviet-American sea battle in the Mediterranean. That no incidents occurred is testimony to the caution and prudence shown by the on-scene commanders.

The seventh question is did actions taken with military forces send inadvertent signals to either adversaries or friends, and did inadvertent military incidents occur that affected efforts to manage the crisis? There were no inadvertent military incidents serious enough to affect the crisis, but there were instances of U.S. leaders misperceiving the political signals being sent by Soviet naval movements.

In his memoirs, Kissinger makes this observation on the naval situation in the Mediterranean as of October 6: "Interestingly, Soviet naval units that had left Egyptian ports on October 5 moved <u>west</u>. They, too, were demonstrating noninvolvement while retaining the capacity for rapid action."[597] There are two problems with this assessment of Soviet naval moves. First, Soviet naval actions were more complex than Kissinger describes: not all the Soviet ships that left Egypt went west, two went to

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[597] Kissinger, <u>Years of Upheaval</u>, p. 475.

Syria; several Soviet ships remained in Alexandria throughout the war; and the Soviets were also moving AGIs and minesweepers <u>into</u> the war zone. The actual pattern of Soviet naval operations suggests a higher degree of Soviet commitment to Syria and Egypt than Kissinger perceived. Second, the Soviet ships that Kissinger describes as moving west actually went to Soviet anchorages off Crete. The practical reason for that was that Soviet replenishment and supply ships were located at the anchorages. Additionally, the Soviets were concentrating their major warships off Crete to counter the U.S. Sixth Fleet.[598] The Crete anchorages occupy a strategic position in the eastern Mediterranean, ideal for covering the Sixth Fleet when it moves into the area. Thus, the actual signal being sent by Soviet ships moving west was that of Soviet intent to neutralize the Sixth Fleet.

Kissinger's assessment of Soviet-American naval interaction during the crisis is also revealing: "The two fleets, signaling parallel intentions, later met off Crete and started milling around there."[599] The two fleets meeting off Crete was not a coincidence arising from parallel political intentions; it was driven by strategic and tactical military considerations. The Soviet ships

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[598] Weinland, p. 80.

[599] Ibid.

moved into position to launch a preemptive strike against the U.S. carriers if such became necessary. The Soviets probably were not signaling intentions parallel to those of the U.S. when they concentrated the Mediterranean Squadron off Crete. Kissinger misperceived the intent of the Soviet naval moves, giving them a political interpretation reflecting his view at the start of the crisis that Soviet intentions were benign. Interestingly, Kissinger's views of Soviet intentions changed dramatically during the crisis as the extent of Soviet support for Egypt and Syria became clear.[600] The key point is that naval movements are inherently ambiguous and their intent easily misperceived.

Naval analysts and other observers have read political signals into several other U.S. and Soviet naval actions during the crisis.[601] It is not clear, however, that any of those alleged signals were intentional or that the other side perceived the signals allegedly being sent. In every case the naval actions can be accounted for by motives or considerations other than political signalling, such as logistic requirements or improving tactical readiness. This further underscores the inherent ambiguity of naval movements as political signals, and the tendency for naval

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[600] On how Kissinger's views evolved during the crisis, see Ibid, pp. 469, 474-75, 497, 507-10, 518-19, 578-91.

[601] See Watson, p. 115; Weinland, pp. 73, 75; Roberts, pp. 196, 210; Galia Golan, "Soviet Decisionmaking," p. 202.

movements to be perceived as political signals even when undertaken for non-political purposes.

The eighth question is did any of the three tensions between political and military considerations arise during the crisis? Two of the three tensions arose during the crisis. There was serious tension between political considerations and the needs of diplomatic bargaining, on the one hand, and military considerations and the needs of military operations, on the other. The most serious tension was between Washington's need to control Sixth Fleet movements for political purposes and the on-scene commander's need for freedom to maneuver the fleet in order to reduce its vulnerability.

As was discussed earlier, the White House insisted on restricting the movements of the Sixth Fleet lest the fleet's movements send a misleading signal of U.S. intentions to the Soviet Union. According to Vice Admiral Engen, this was "A real sticking point. . . . Very restrictive and destroyed flexibility of naval forces. This was a big issue with COMSIXTHFLT--and properly so."[602] Admiral Zumwalt has described the tension that arose from close White house control of Sixth Fleet movements:

> Moreover, the orders were extraordinarily rigid. They specified latitudes and longitudes and gave Dan [Vice Admiral Murphy] little or no room for tactical maneuvers aimed at making his missions easier to carry

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[602] Engen, letter to author, April 25, 1988.

> out or his forces easier to protect or, optimally, both. Several times during the next few days Dan asked permission of the JCS . . . to move these ships or those toward the east in order to make his surveillance of the battle scene more effective and evacuation of Americans from the Middle East, if it came to that, more rapid. Each request was turned down by Admiral Moorer, acting, he told me, on instructions from the White House, which almost certainly meant Henry Kissinger.603

To explain the nature of the Sixth Fleet's vulnerability requires a brief review of modern naval warfare.

The Soviet tactic of keeping ships and submarines armed with anti-ship cruise missiles within striking range of the U.S. carriers created serious operational problems for the Sixth Fleet. Modern anti-ship missiles, particularly the very large missiles favored by the Soviet navy, allow a single weapon to destroy or seriously damage a ship. Tactically, all the missile needs to do is knock the ship out of the battle--achieving what the Navy refers to a a "mission kill." Captain Frank Andrews has described the threat represented by anti-ship missiles: "A carrier battle group is liable to serious wounds from preemptive missile attack in forward waters . . . because modern technology affords so much advantage to the side which strikes first that the victim may be unable to defend himself."[604] Soviet Navy doctrine places heavy emphasis on the first strike,

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[603] Zumwalt, <u>On Watch</u>, p. 436.

[604] Captain Frank Andrews, "The Prevention of Preemptive Attack," U.S. Naval Institute <u>Proceedings</u> 106 (May 1980): 128.

making it a central objective of strategy as well as tactics. Soviet naval writings emphasize the importance of "the battle of the first salvo."[605] The tactical doctrines of the superpower navies interact, producing a war initiation scenario described in the U.S. Navy as the "D-day shootout."[606] Anti-ship missiles can be difficult to defend against, making destruction of the launch platform the most effective defense against them. U.S. Navy tactical doctrine for the defense of surface ship battle groups thus emphasizes destruction of launch platforms before they can launch their missiles.[607] Thus, the side that gets off the first salvo in the D-day shootout is likely to accrue a

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[605] Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union Sergei G. Gorshkov, Red Star Rising at Sea (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1974), pp. 131-132; Charles D. Petersen, "About-Face in Soviet Tactics," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 109 (August 1983): 57-63; Lieutenant Commander Alan D. Zimm, "The First Salvo," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 111 (February 1985): 55-60; T.A. Fitzgerald, "Blitzkrieg at Sea," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 112 (January 1986): 33-38.

[606] Admiral Harry D. Train, "Decision Making and Managing Ambiguity in Politico-Military Crisis," in James G. March and Roger Weissinger-Baylon, eds., Ambiguity and Command: Organizational Perspectives on Military Decision Making (Marshfield, MA: Pitman Publishing, 1986), p. 306.

[607] See Kidd, "View From the Bridge," 18-29; Admiral Stansfield Turner and Commander George Thibault, "Countering the Soviet Threat in the Mediterranean," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 103 (July 1977): 25-32; Lieutenant Commander T. Wood Parker, "Thinking Offensively," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 107 (April 1981): 26-31; Captain William J. Ruhe, "Antiship Missiles Launch New Tactics," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 108 (December 1982): 60-65; Andrews, "Prevention of Preemptive Attack," pp. 126-39; Gregory, "Their Tattletales," pp. 97-99.

significant tactical advantage that could determine the outcome of a war at sea.

Requiring that a task group operate at a fixed location with little freedom to maneuver (known in the Navy as a "ModLoc") increases its vulnerability to a Soviet preemptive strike. Commander Frederick Glaeser has described the problems that arise from this practice:

> Although ModLocs are defended as visible proofs of presence, they are in fact the first step in targeting by an enemy. . . . A force in ModLoc is trapped in a set-piece battle in which an enemy with superior numbers can organize an overwhelming coordinated attack. In essence, we choose the place, and the enemy selects the time, weather, and politically opportune moment for his attack."[608]

This is exactly the situation in which the White House placed the Sixth Fleet. The fleet was not granted the freedom to maneuver it needed in order to outrun slower Soviet tattletales and to prevent the Soviets from keeping the carriers constantly targeted.[609]

In a preemptive strike against the three U.S. carriers on October 25, the Soviet Navy would have been able to launch a first salvo of about thirteen anti-ship missiles against each U.S. carrier--an extremely dangerous threat that could be effectively countered only by destroying

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[608] Commander Frederick J. Glaeser, "Guerrilla Warfare at Sea," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings 109 (August 1983): 42.

[609] Engen, letter to author, April 25, 1988; Morin, letter to author, April 14, 1988; Dixon, letter to author, April 18, 1988; Glassman, p. 162.

Soviet launch platforms before they were able to fire their weapons.[610] Conversely, if the U.S. struck the first blow, it would seriously degrade the ability of the Soviet Navy to destroy the U.S. carriers. U.S. warships, their guns manned and ready, and U.S. attack aircraft, armed with conventional bombs and missiles, kept every Soviet ship that could threaten the carriers constantly in their sights. Both sides thus had strong incentives to strike first if they believed that war was imminent. This was a tense and dangerous situation that would have been at least partially alleviated if the Sixth Fleet had been granted freedom to maneuver at will. The intense tactical-level interactions were not under the direct control of U.S. leaders, who appear not to have understood the chain of events they had set in motion (despite warnings from Admirals Moorer and Zumwalt). Thus, a restriction imposed on the fleet for political purposes (avoiding misperceptions of U.S. intentions) exacerbated the risks of a military confrontation and the danger that a minor incident could touch off an armed clash at sea between the superpowers.

There was also serious tension between the need for top-level control of military operations in a crisis, and the need for tactical flexibility and instantaneous

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[610] On October 31, the height of the Soviet buildup in the Mediterranean, the first salvo would have been about 26 missiles against each U.S. carrier.

decisionmaking at the scene of the crisis. The tension over level of control was worse than it had been in the 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis and the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, but not as bad as it had been in the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. President Nixon and Schlesinger respected the military chain of command, using it to send orders to the Sixth Fleet rather than attempting to communicate directly with the fleet. Tensions arose primarily from the emphasis that President Nixon and Kissinger placed on using the Sixth fleet to send political signals, which required close White House control over the fleet's movements.[611] Vice Admiral Murphy objected to this tight control because it placed the fleet in a tactically untenable position, vulnerable to Soviet preemption, but his requests for greater freedom to maneuver the fleet were denied by the White House.[612] Vice Admiral Engen cited this as the most important lesson of the crisis: "Give the on-scene commander authority [up] to specified limits and leave him alone to position his forces in the way that he feels is best. Don't try to do 'squad right or left' from Washington."[613] Although the Navy chain of command was irritated by White House control of Sixth

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[611] Zumwalt, interview by author, February 16, 1988; Engen, letter to author, April 25, 1988.

[612] Zumwalt, <u>On Watch</u>, p. 436; Engen, letter to author, April 25, 1988.

[613] Engen, letter to author, April 25, 1988.

Fleet movements, there was no deep resentment against perceived civilian interference as in the Cuban Missile Crisis.

There was moderate tension between performance of crisis political missions and readiness to perform wartime combat missions. Admiral Moorer states that there was no concern that the Navy's response to the crisis would degrade its ability to respond to threats elsewhere, and that wartime considerations influenced the location of the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean: "Our primary consideration was the time required to get in strike position."[614] This suggests that positioning of the Sixth Fleet was influenced by military considerations (the time it would take the fleet to reach a launch point for air strikes against targets in the Middle East and the Soviet Union), as well as by the political considerations described by Kissinger.

The commanding officers of the carriers Kennedy and Roosevelt state that they did not experience a degradation of their readiness to perform wartime missions during the crisis. The increased readiness condition of the Sixth Fleet resulted in improved logistic support for the ships in the Mediterranean and the increased tempo of operations actually improved readiness by providing more flight time for pilots.[615] On the other hand, because the fleet was on

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[614] T.H. Moorer, interview by author, February 9, 1988.

[615] Morin, letter to author, April 14, 1988; Dixon, letter to author, April 18, 1988

standby for Middle East contingencies, routine exercises intended to improve the combat proficiency of the fleet were cancelled. This was a cause for concern on the part of Vice Admiral Murphy and Vice Admiral Engen.[616] But the greatest concerns for U.S. wartime readiness arose from the transfer of large quantities of U.S. military equipment and munitions to Israel. This depleted U.S. war-reserve stocks and left some operational units without sufficient equipment and supplies to carry out wartime missions.[617] Thus, although Sixth Fleet operations in the crisis did not degrade the fleet's readiness for wartime operations, U.S. resupply of Israel degraded the overall combat readiness of U.S. forces.

In summary, the stratified interaction model accurately describes Soviet-American interaction during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. There was intense tactical-level interaction between U.S. and Soviet naval forces in the Mediterranean, and significant decoupling of tactical-level interactions from political-level crisis management efforts. The overall pattern was one of parallel stratified interactions with frequent momentary decoupling. U.S. and Soviet naval forces were very tightly coupled during the crisis, but there were no serious incidents between them. There were serious political-military tensions arising from

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[616] Engen, letter to author, April 25, 1988.

[617] Zumwalt, <u>On Watch</u>, p. 441.

close White House control over the location and movements of the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented case studies of four crises in which U.S. naval forces played a significant role: the 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis, the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, and the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. Eight research questions addressing the theory of stratified interaction and its corollaries were answered in each case study. The the four case studies showed that the stratified interaction model provides an accurate description of international interaction in crises. The next chapter will examine four cases of peacetime attacks on U.S. Navy ships in order to take a closer look at how the military chain of command reacts to such incidents. Chapter IX will then use the findings from all eight of the case studies in a structured, focused comparison in order to derive contingent generalizations on crisis interaction and crisis stability.